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THE GIFT OF

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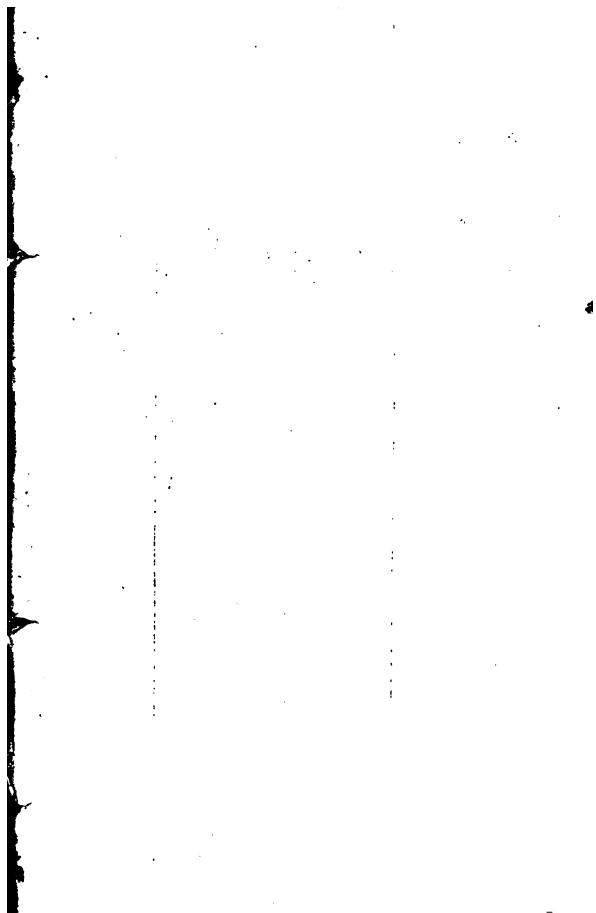




Illustration.

*For the sabbath is not only a day of rest to the body
But it is a day of refreshment to the mind.*





Thackeray's
In the contemplation of a second existence the
Borrowed man figures to himself a state of reunion.

PHILADELPHIA
KEY AND BIDDLE
1834.



Teacher's Use

*For the sabbath is not only a day of rest to the body
But it is a day of refreshment to the mind.*



THE
YOUNG MAN'S
SUNDAY BOOK



*In the contemplation of a second existence the
Bearded man figures to himself a state of rousion.*

PHILADELPHIA
KEY AND BIDDLE
1834.



THE
YOUNG MAN'S
SUNDAY BOOK;

A
PRACTICAL EXHIBITION
OF
DOCTRINES, DUTIES, AND PRINCIPLES,

ADAPTED
TO IMPROVE THE TASTE, TO EXCITE THE REFLECTION,
AND TO PROMOTE THE PIETY, USEFULNESS,
AND HAPPINESS, OF THE YOUNG.

Philadelphia:
KEY & BIDDLE—23, MINOR STREET.

.....
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Gift
Mrs. G. F. Allmendinger
3-12-31 PREFACE.

12-13-32 *End*

CORRECT ideas of God, and of ourselves, are the beginnings of all moral improvement. Such ideas are important, in every department of human inquiry; but more especially so, on a subject where error must affect injuriously, if not fatally, the interests of the soul, and of eternity. These are the interests to which all others should be made the tributaries and servants; and, in endeavouring to guide the minds of those whose character may be supposed to be unformed, great care has been taken to impress upon them a due sense of the value of their spiritual interests, and to advance nothing liable to encourage or permit error, through any deficiency of instruction therein,—or that might seem to teach any doctrine, at variance with the approved standards of Christian belief.

The materials of this volume have been gathered from not less than forty authors, acknowledged as possessing the highest distinction for piety and learning. The extracts which have been made generally combine great elegance of language, with pious and practical sentiment. It has been intended,

that, so far as they go, they should serve to establish a correct judgment and taste in composition, and a pure faith and practice in religion. Many of them have been selected from old writers, and it is believed that not a little good will be done, if they should cause the reader to seek a more familiar acquaintance with works which contain the wisdom of the past, and to regard them as the greater lights, in which the later, and—not of consequence, but of fault—the lesser, shine.

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THE

Young Man's Sunday Book.

OUR FAITH MOST HOLY.

To make a wicked and sinful man most holy through his believing, is more than to create a world of nothing. Our faith most holy! Surely Solomon could not show the Queen of Sheba so much treasure in all his kingdom, as is lapt up in these words. O that our hearts were stretched out like tents, and that the eyes of our understanding were as bright as the sun, that we might thoroughly know the riches of the glorious inheritance of the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power towards us, whom he accepteth for pure and most holy, through our believing. O that the Spirit of the Lord would give this doctrine entrance into the stony and brazen heart of the Jew, who followeth the law of righteousness, but cannot attain unto the righteousness of the law! Wherefore they seek righteousness, and not by faith; wherefore they stumble at Christ, they are bruised, shivered to pieces, as a ship that hath run herself upon a rock. O that God would cast down the eyes of the proud, and humble the souls of the high-minded!—that they might at length abhor the garments of their own flesh, which cannot hide their nakedness, and put on the faith of Christ

Jesus, as he did put it on, who hath said, "Doubtless I think all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have counted all things loss, and do judge them to be dung, that I might win Christ, and might be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law ; but that which is through the faith of Christ, even the righteousness which is of God through faith." O that God would open the ark of mercy, wherein this doctrine lieth, and set it wide before the eyes of poor afflicted consciences, which fly up and down upon the waters of their affliction, and can see nothing but only the gulf and deluge of their sins, wherein there is no place for them to rest their feet. The God of pity and compassion give you all strength and courage every day, and every hour, and every moment, to build and edify yourselves in this most pure and holy faith.

IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECTS OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE.

THE subjects of religious knowledge are transcendently important. Its object is not to instruct us in physical or moral science, but in the divine character and government: not in the history of time, but in the realities of eternity. What is the true character of that Great Being who made, preserves, and governs all things? What are the relations in which we stand to him, and what are the duties that arise out of these relations? How came moral and physical evil into our world, and how are they to be mitigated or re-

moved? How is guilty man to be restored to the Divine favour? What are the leading principles on which the moral government of the world is conducted? And in what is that system of divine dispensation to terminate, so far as the destinies of mankind are concerned? These are some of the questions resolved by religion—questions, compared with which, the noblest discoveries of philosophy and science lose their importance, and appear “less than nothing and vanity.”

EXISTENCE OF GOD.

GOD is a spirit, infinite, boundless, illimitable, unfathomable in his conceptions and capacities; but we are finite, circumscribed, and weak in our conceptions. Between the finite and the infinite, there must be an infinite distance; and if there be an infinite distance between the intellect of Gabriel and of God, what must be the distance between ours and his! Those morning-stars gather all the lustre of their vast intelligence from him, and perpetually replenish their effulgent orbs at the fountain of light. Such is God; but God is the great subject of divine revelation, his being, his attributes, his purposes, the principles of his government, and the modes of his existence. Is it probable, then, that all which this volume shall reveal of God we should be able to understand? Is it in the nature of things? Then must the mighty deep compress itself into a scanty rill—the glorious sun pour all its light into a twinkling star—the vast revolutions, the myriads of ages of eternity, be comprehended in the fleeting years of time. For not till then

"shall man by searching find out God," or the finite comprehend the infinite. But because we cannot comprehend it, is it therefore contrary to our reason? No! the very circumstance that we cannot comprehend it, commends it to our reason. The duration we can calculate, is not eternity; the being we can grasp, cannot possibly be infinite. If God were comprehensible by us, he would be a finite being like ourselves; and if revelation told us nothing about God which we could not comprehend, we should say, either the revelation is imperfect, or this being of whom it treats is not God. The doctrine of a God, then, must necessarily be *superior* but not *contrary* to reason.

MEANS OF MORAL IMPROVEMENT.

If we would seek for that, which must be of all conceivable things of the highest moment both for the peace and improvement of the moral being, it is to be found in the habit of mind, in which there is the uniform contemplation of the divine character, with a constant reliance on the guidance of the Almighty in every action of life. "One thing," says the inspired writer, "have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." The man who thus cultivates the habitual impression of the divine presence lives in an atmosphere peculiarly his own. The storms which agitate the lower world may blow around or beneath, but they touch not him; as the traveller has seen from the mountain's top the war of elements below, while he

stood in unclouded sunshine. In the works, and ways, and perfections of the Eternal One, he finds a subject of exalted contemplation, in comparison with which the highest inquiries of human science sink into significance. It is an exercise, also, which tends at once to elevate and to purify the mind. It raises us from the minor concerns and transient interests which are so apt to occupy us, to that wondrous field in which "worlds and worlds compose one universe,"—and to that mind which bade them move in their appointed orbits, and maintains them all in undeviating harmony. While it thus teaches us to bend in humble adoration before a wisdom which we cannot fathom, and a power which we cannot comprehend, it directs our attention to a display of moral attributes which at once challenge our reverence and demand our imitation. By thus leading us to compare ourselves with the supreme excellence, it tends to produce profound humility, and, at the same time, that habitual aspiration after moral improvement which constitutes the highest state of man. "The proud," says an eloquent writer, "look down upon the earth, and see nothing that creeps upon its surface more noble than themselves; the humble look upwards to their God." This disposition of mind, so far from being opposed to the acquirements of philosophy, sits with peculiar grace upon the man who, through the most zealous cultivation of human science, ascends to the eternal Cause. The farther he advances in the wonders of nature, the higher he rises in his adoration of the power and the wisdom which guide the whole;—"Where others see a sun, he sees a Deity." And then, in every step of life,

whether of danger, distress, or difficulty, the man who cultivates this intercourse with the incomprehensible One "inquires in his temple." He inquires for the guidance of divine wisdom, and the strength of divine aid, in his progress through the state of moral discipline; he inquires, in a peculiar manner, for this aid in the culture of his moral being, when he views this mighty undertaking in its important reference to the life which is to come; he inquires for a discernment of the ways of Divine Providence, as he either feels it in his own concerns, or views it in the chain of events which are going on in the world around him. He learns to trace the whole to the same unerring hand which guides the planet in its course; and thus rests in the absolute conviction that the economy of Providence is one great and magnificent system of design, and order, and harmony. These are no visions of the imagination, but the sound inductions of a calm and rational philosophy. They are conclusions which compel the assent of every candid inquirer, when he follows out that investigation of mighty import,—what is God,—and what is that essence in man which he has endowed with the power of rising to himself.

THE PROVINCE OF THE MENTAL FACULTIES IN MORAL IMPROVEMENT.

THE restoration of man from a state of estrangement, anarchy, or moral death we are taught in the sacred writings to refer to a power from without the mind,—an influence directly from God.* But, without in any degree losing

sight of the truth and the importance of this principle, the immediate object of our attention is rather the process of the mind itself, by means of which an habitual influence is produced upon the whole character. This is a compound operation, which may probably be analyzed in the following manner. It seems to be composed of reason, attention, and a modification of conception. The province of Reason is to examine the truth of the statements or doctrines which are proposed to the mind as calculated to act upon its moral feelings; and upon this being done in a correct manner must depend the validity of the subsequent parts of the mental process. This being premised, it is the office of Attention, aided by reason, to direct the mind assiduously to the truths, so as fully to perceive their relations and tendencies. By the farther process, analogous to Conception, they are then placed before us in such a manner as to give them the effect of real and present existence. By these means, truths relating to things for which we have not the evidence of our senses, or referring to events which are future, but fully expected to happen, are kept before the mind, and influence the moral feelings and the character in the same manner as if the facts believed were actually seen, or the events expected were taking place in our view. This mental operation is *Faith*; and for the sound exercise of it the constituent elements now mentioned are essentially necessary. The truth must be received by the judgment upon adequate evidence; and, by the other parts of the process, it must be so kept before the mind, that it may exercise such a moral influence as

might arise from the actual vision, or present existence, of the things believed.

Attention to these considerations will probably enable us to discover some of the fallacies which have obscured and bewildered this important subject. When the impression which is thus allowed to influence the mind is one which has not been received by the judgment, upon due examination, and adequate evidence of its truth,—this is enthusiasm,—not faith. Our present course of inquiry does not lead us to treat of the notions which have, in various individuals, been thus allowed to usurp the place of truth. To those who would preserve themselves from the influence of such, the first great inquiry, respecting their own mental impressions, ought to be,—are they facts?—and on what evidence do they rest which can satisfy a sound understanding that they are so? On the other hand is to be avoided an error, not less dangerous than the wildest fancies of the enthusiast, and not less unworthy of a regulated mind. This consists in treating real and important truths as if they were visions of the imagination, and thus dismissing them, without examination, from the influence which they ought to produce upon the moral feelings. It is singular also to remark how these two modifications of character may be traced to a condition of the reasoning powers essentially the same. The former receives a fiction of the imagination, and rests upon it as truth. The latter, acting upon some prejudice or mental impression which has probably no better foundation, puts away real and important truths without any examination of the evidence on which they are founded. The misapplication of the reasoning powers is the

same in both. It consists in proceeding upon a mere impression, without exercising the judgment on the question of its evidence, or on the facts and considerations which are opposed to it. Two characters of a very opposite description thus meet in that mental condition, which draws them equally, though in different directions, astray from the truth.

BEST USE OF THE STUDY OF NATURE.

THE study of nature ought to be made subservient to religion. Let philosophy be the handmaid of theology. There is not a star in the heavens, nor a flower in the fields, which does not declare the glory of God. To look upon nature, therefore, without any reference to its Author, to admire the work, without admiring the Workman, is folly, is stupidity, is atheism. How cold is the heart, and how dull the understanding of the man, who, contemplating the magnificent spectacle of the heavens, feels no pious emotions arising in his breast, and is completely absorbed in the speculations of science! He is not to be envied, although the voice of fame should pronounce him to be the first of philosophers, who sees nothing in the universe but matter and motion; and having pointed out, perhaps more successfully than others, its constitution and laws, still refuses to acknowledge an intelligent Agent, who made and governs it. Alas! that in this enlightened age, there should be so many to whom the severe, but well founded remark of an inspired writer, concerning the

sages of antiquity, may be, with too much justice, applied: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."

OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD.

WOULD we be struck with admiration and astonishment, at beholding a superior created intelligence tossing a mountain into the sea? What strong emotions of reverence and awe, then, ought to pervade our minds, when we behold the Almighty every moment producing effects infinitely more powerful and astonishing! What would be our astonishment, were we to behold from a distance, a globe as large as the earth tossed from the hand of Omnipotence, and flying at the rate of a thousand miles every minute! Yet this is nothing more than what is every day produced by the unceasing energies of that Power which first called us into existence.—That impulse which was first given to the earth at its creation is still continued, by which it is carried round every day from west to east, along with its vast population, and at the same time impelled forward through the regions of space at the rate of sixty-eight thousand miles in an hour.—Nor is this among the most wonderful effects of divine power: it is only one comparatively small specimen of that omnipotent energy which resides in the Eternal Mind.—When we lift our eyes towards the sky, we behold bodies a thousand times larger than this world of ours, impelled with similar velocities through the mighty expanse of the universe. We behold the plenary globes wheeling their rapid courses

around the sun, with unremitting velocity—the comets returning from their long excursions in the distant regions of space, and flying towards the centre of our system with a velocity of hundreds of thousands of miles an hour—the sun himself, impelled towards some distant region of space, and carrying along with him all his attendant planets—and, in a word, we have the strongest reason to conclude, that all the vast systems of the universe, which are more numerous than language can express—are in rapid and incessant motion around the throne of the Eternal, carrying forward the grand designs of infinite wisdom which they were destined to accomplish.

INCOMPREHENSIBILITY OF GOD.

ALL the discoveries of modern science serve to exalt the Deity, but they do not contribute a single iota to the explanation of his purposes. They make him greater, but they do not make him more comprehensible. He is more shrouded in mystery than ever. It is not himself whom we see, it is his workmanship; and every new addition to its grandeur or to its variety, which philosophy opens to our contemplation, throws our understanding at a greater distance than before, from the mind and conception of the sublime Architect. Instead of the God of a single world, we now see him presiding, in all the majesty of his high attributes, over a mighty range of innumerable systems. To our little eye he is wrapt in more awful mysteriousness; and every new glimpse which astronomy gives us of the universe, magnifies to the apprehension of our mind,

that impassable barrier which stands between the counsels of its sovereign, and those fugitive beings who strut their evanescent hour in the humblest of its mansions. If this invisible Being would only break that mysterious silence in which he has wrapt himself, we feel that a single word from his mouth would be worth a world of darkling speculations. Every new triumph which the mind of man achieves in the field of discovery, binds us more firmly to our Bible; and by the very proportion in which philosophy multiplies the wonders of God, do we prize that book, on which the evidence of history has stamped the character of his authentic communication.

HOLINESS OF GOD.

"Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name," say the blest inhabitants of heaven, "for thou only art holy." No other fountain of holiness is there in the universe than the God whom they adore. As his *will* is the standard and criterion of holiness, so his *nature* is essentially characterized by holiness. It is holiness. As well could he cease to *be*, as cease to be holy. Other holy beings there are; but their holiness is derived and dependent. Pure and glorious as are the angels of light, yet so transcendently glorious is their Creator, that it is said, "He putteth no trust in his servants, and chargeth his angels with *instability*." No confidence is to be placed in the stability even of their holiness, except as sustained by himself. Although in spotless sanctity they present their adorations before his throne, yet is their nature, in common with

all created nature, mutable. Of this who can entertain a doubt, that reflects on the awful apostasy of myriads of their family, now consigned to the blackness of darkness for ever ! Nor does the security of those who retain their holiness and their bliss, result from any immutability in themselves, but from the purpose and the power of him whose they are, and whom they serve ; in whose presence they are represented as veiling with their wings their faces, as if dazzled with the splendour of his holiness ; and veiling with their wings their feet, as if conscious of unworthiness to approach the throne of his glory.

PATIENCE OF GOD.

SIN, in every shape, and form, and degree, is that abominable thing which God hates ; against which every attribute of his nature, and every principle of his government, must of necessity rise up in direct and unalterable hostility. Men are disposed to treat with lenity and indulgence those improprieties to which they are themselves inclined, while they would visit, with the full weight of punishment, offences to the commission of which they themselves feel no temptation. But never was there a sin of thought, or word, or action, which was not diametrically opposed to the unchanging nature of the blessed God. His name is holy ; his law is holy ; his throne is holy ; his heaven is holy ; and all its inhabitants are holy : and yet it is to the unholy, it is to those who are in rebellion against the attributes of his nature, that his wondrous patience is extended.

LOVE OF GOD.

How must the infinite Creator behave towards such audacious and impotent rebels? He can crush them in a moment; he can repress them into nothing again; he can extinguish all nature in the twinkling of an eye.—How is it that this has not happened thousands of years ago? for this insolence of ours against the Almighty, is as universal and ancient as the history of man on the earth. What is that God, and who is He, that can persevere in bearing all this? He must have some character still greater than that of Creator, to unfold to the creatures he preserves in a state of such ungrateful rebellion. It is so; for he has it in his power to be their Judge, and his own avenger every moment. But is it possible; can it be credited indeed? He would be their FATHER—he wishes to call these insignificant apostates his children, and that they should call him Father. Omnipotent Justice! how glorious art thou; who canst vindicate thyself in the effusion of love upon the guilty, and transform thine awful decisions into the yearnings of parental affection towards abject apostates! Ungrateful child! But thou art still more miserable than thou art rebellious—unhappy that thou knowest me not. No: thou shalt not be my hired servant—come to my arms, thou art my son still!

O God! this is creating indeed! Can the wretchedness of profligate apostasy warm Omnipotence into this? Can tremendous justice vindicate itself, in dissolving my contumacy, by cherishing me in a bosom burning with the affection of a parent? My Creator—my Father! Is this possible? Father to an unworthy reptile

venerable, and, to sinners, terrific; Purity and Sanctity are amiable and sublime. But they seem to shed too bright a lustre for the feeble eyes of imperfect and degenerate creatures. Goodness tempers these rays, softens the awe of Majesty, attracts to the contemplation of Divinity; and raises, by affection and hope, the hearts which reverence, mixed with terror, had sunk in deep and trembling prostration! This attribute, inseparably united with every other, imparts to their assemblage those colours and that aspect, which cheer and delight the soul. Goodness, eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, unlimited in its exertions; Goodness, directing the whole frame and order of the universe, and graciously modifying the severity of Justice, constitutes the description of an all-perfect Being, completes the idea of the divine nature—is the just representation of God!

The Father has a heart of large bounty to the poor ruined race of Adam; the Son has a hand fit to be the almoner to the King of glory; and the Spirit is the rich alms. The blessed donative has enriched ten thousand souls already, and there remains enough to enrich ten thousand worlds.

The Father what a glorious giver! The Son, what a glorious medium of communication! And the Spirit, what a glorious gift!—We blush and adore while we partake of such immense favours, and gratitude is even overwhelmed with wonder.

O let our spirits rejoice in this blessed article of our religion: and may all the temptation we

may encounter from men of reason never, never
baffle so sweet a faith !

If the goodness of God is so admirably seen in the works of nature, and the favours of providence, with what a noble superiority does it even triumph in the mystery of redemption ! Redemption is the brightest mirror in which to contemplate this most lovely attribute of the Deity. Other gifts are only as mites from the divine treasury ; but redemption opens, I had almost said, exhausts all the stores of his glorious grace. Herein God commendeth his love ; not only manifests, but renders it perfectly marvellous ; manifests it in so stupendous a manner, that it is beyond parallel, beyond thought, and above all blessing and praise.

The Supreme Being has not given us powers or faculties sufficient to extol and magnify such unutterable goodness. It is, however, some comfort to us, that we shall always be doing what we shall never be able to do, and that a work which cannot be finished, will, however, be the work of eternity.

MERCY OF GOD.

ALL the divine excellencies rejoice together in the efforts of mercy. Love, grace, and mercy, claim no share in the triumphs of vindictive justice, but justice claims a share in the triumphs of love, grace, and mercy in Christ ; for justice gets its due before mercy could be obtained ; and the throne of grace stands upon judgment fully exe-

cuted, and justice fully satisfied. Is not this noble encouragement for those who are by nature the objects of vindictive justice, to hope in divine mercy? Why should any person refuse to give God the glory of all his perfections, by trusting to his mercy in Christ? Why should they refuse to see the crown on Christ's head, or to allow him to triumph over Satan, in showing mercy to the most miserable? Why refuse to shine as jewels in his crown, or to adorn his triumphal entry into glory at the last day? For no stone in the Redeemer's crown will shine more brilliantly than the redeemed from among men, who have been defiled by sin. None will be more like the angels in seraphic love, none can enjoy redeeming love more sweetly, and none will employ their voices more ardently in the song of Moses and the Lamb. Yea, none will more clearly perceive the perfect consistency of the salvation of the chief of sinners, with the holiness and justice of God and his law, than the objects of new covenant mercy. Has mercy, then, restored things to an honourable and comfortable situation? Let mercy then for ever reign. Let it shine gloriously, in forgiving the chief of sinners. And let the guilty objects of wrath appeal from judgment to mercy, which extends its arms to embrace them.

GLORY OF GOD.

WHAT then are we to understand by the glory of God? In answer to this, suffer me to ask you, what do you mean by the glory of a man? Is it not some excellent and honourable quality, where-

by he is distinguished from, and raised above, all his fellow-creatures? The glory of a wise man is the display of his wisdom; the glory of a mighty man is the display of his strength. By the first, the one is raised above, and distinguished from the rude and illiterate tribes; by the second, the other is raised above the inexperienced, timid, and unsuccessful general, by virtue of his superior skill in military tactics. Any excellent quality found in the creature in a finite degree, is to be found in the Creator in an infinite degree. By the glory of the Lord, therefore, must be meant, not the excellent attributes of his nature only, but the degree thereof, whereby he is distinguished from, and raised infinitely above, all his creatures and all his works. This is not all; it also includes the united display and operations thereof. We all know that the glory of the bright king of day does not consist in being merely a body of light and heat; this he is in himself, when his rays at the dawn of day gild the tops of the mountains, amidst the surly blasts of dreary winter, by which his beauteous beams are shorn—nay, in the dark and dreary hour of night, when to us invisible; but his glory is the most clear, full, and pleasing display of his strength in his meridian brightness—So the divine glory is not the possession of his excellent attributes in an infinite degree, but the display thereof in their utmost extent and harmony.

THE DIVINE CHARACTER.

THE design of missionary labours in reference to God, is to display the glories of his character and administration to all mankind, and by this means to reclaim them from a state of rebellion, and reduce them to a state of loyal subjection and affectionate allegiance to him as the supreme ruler.

The divine Being combines in his character and administration, all that is great and good, fair and excellent, venerable and lovely. When we have strained our faculties to the utmost in conceiving of grandeur, and purity, and benignity, we are still at an immeasurable distance from the grandeur, and purity, and benignity, which make his infinite nature their eternal dwelling-place. "His is the greatness," and the highest of his creatures, the totality of his creation is before him less than a drop to the ocean, than an atom to the universe of matter. "His is the power," and all created might is in his hand, to be exerted, directed, restrained, and resumed at his pleasure. "His is the glory," and all created splendour in his presence fades into obscurity, vanishes into nothing. "His is the victory;" in all his purposes he ever is the overcomer, and all victories gained by his creatures are won by power derived from him. "His is the majesty," and all the potentates of the earth before Him are contemptible worms, and their loftiest thrones are not worthy to be his footstool. "All that is in the heaven and in the earth is his;" he is the Maker, Preserver, and Governor—the supreme and sole proprietor of the universe. "His is the kingdom:" unbounded dominion belongs to him,

and all powers and authorities are under his feet ; and all this grandeur is beautified by absolute moral perfection. His is a purity, before which the holiness of angels waxes dim ; and his a benignant tenderness, of which the yearnings of a mother's heart over the son of her womb is but a feeble figure. And, is it not meet, that all intelligent beings should acknowledge this supreme excellence and loveliness, and in the inmost sanctuary of their intellectual and active natures, yield him to whom it belongs the tribute of supreme reverence and love ? Who, that has a spark of allegiance to the supreme authority, will not, from the bottom of his soul, breathe out the wish, "Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens ; let thy glory be above all the earth." "Let all the earth fear the Lord ; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him."

WISDOM OF GOD IN HIS ADMINISTRATION.

ALTHOUGH God may be said to act arbitrarily, yet he never doth any thing unadvisedly, but according to the counsel, which is always rational, though our shallow reason in this state of degeneracy and mortality be not able to fathom the depth of its contrivements, and thereupon cavil at, and call in question the equity of them. Such as do so, must give me leave to say unto them, as one of our ancient writers did to their forefathers, "The apostle (saith he) having discoursed of these mysteries, acknowledgeth their depth, and adoreth the wisdom of God in them. Be thou also willing to be ignorant of such

things. Leave God himself in the modelling of his decrees and dispensations. He will be sure to do it so as not to stand in need of any apology or defence of thine." To which let me add a saying of Luther, "Reason (saith he) thou art a fool, and dost not understand the matters of God. Wherefore be not obstreperous, but hold thy prating: make not thyself a judge of these things, but attend to the word of God, and believe."

WISDOM OF GOD DISPLAYED IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

AN evidence of the wisdom of God in the cross of Christ is, that the doctrine of it is designed especially to counteract the very sin by which man originally fell. Man fell by pride, he is restored in a way of humility. He fell by self-dependence, he is saved by self-renunciation. We lost ourselves by a vain desire after wisdom, we return to God by the foolishness of the cross. As we sinned by presumptuous curiosity, the wisdom of God humbles us at the very root of the tree of knowledge, and compels us to renounce the pride of our understanding, and submit to faith. Every thing connected with the cross of Christ opposes the reigning evil of our fallen hearts. Human wisdom receives not the doctrine. Human pride comprehends nothing of it. Repentance begins in humility, faith moves in it as its proper atmosphere, claiming nothing but from the undeserved mercy of God; prayer is the breathing of humility; justification is a free gift; salvation is of grace, holy obedience is the fruit of submission. Every step, every act, every

duty, every feeling of a Christian, all is humility. Sin has changed the way to happiness. In the first, God wished to draw men to a knowledge of himself, by the use of their reason, and the consideration of the wisdom of his works. In the second, the Saviour draws men by the folly of the word of the cross, and by the subjection of their reason and will to the doctrine of faith. Religion is the remedy of human pride, as it is not so much a science of the understanding as of the heart.

GLODY OF GOD ILLUSTRATED IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

ONE of the ends which our Lord's death aimed at, was the illustration of God's glory, by demonstrating and displaying therein his most excellent attributes and perfections ; so doth St. Paul teach us : " Whom God (saith he) hath set forth a propitiation, by faith in his blood, for a demonstration of his righteousness." That is, as I take it, of his goodness, his justice, his fidelity, his constancy, of all those commendable perfections, which are expressed in dealing with others ; and our Lord, his passion being instantly to follow, made this reflection, " Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him ; and, " I have glorified thee upon earth ; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." God did therein show himself most highly good and gracious, in so providing for the welfare of those who deserved nothing of him—who deserved ill of him, who had offended and injured him very heinously : he manifesteth himself most strictly

just, in not suffering iniquity to go unpunished ; but rather than so, exposing his own dear son to punishment, and in him choosing himself to suffer ;—he declared his wisdom in contriving so admirable an expedient, whereby both his goodness might be exercised, and his justice not infringed ;—he showed his veracity, fidelity, and constancy, in executing, by his providence, what he before had designed and promised, although so grievous and bitter to the Son of his love ;—he therein also laid a ground of declaring his almighty power, in raising him from the dead, as likewise of his goodness and justice in exalting him. Thus by our Saviour's death was the divine glory much illustrated, and our good consequently promoted ; for that we therein contemplating him so admirable for goodness, so terrible for justice, so venerable for all excellency, may be induced thence to love him, to dread him, to worship and reverence him, as it becometh us, and as it is necessary for us, in order to our happiness.

"MERCY AND TRUTH MET TOGETHER."

By this medium (the death of Christ) all the rights of the divine attributes are preserved in their harmony ;—goodness appears inexhaustible, sin formidable, and the divine government venerable ; the punishment of the sinner is translated on the substitute, that the merit of the substitute may, according to divine order, be made over to the sinner ; and so justice boils against the rebellion, and the bowels of mercy yearn towards the rebel ; the designs of mercy are ac-

omplished, and the lustre of holiness preserved ; the riches of grace displayed, and the sceptre of justice revered : the honour of the Lawgiver and the equity of the law asserted ; his wrath appeased, and the dreadful sentence suspended ; his right of government vindicated, sin disgraced, and pardon dispensed ; the law preserved from contempt, and the creature not tempted to rebel.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S TRUE CHARACTER A SOURCE OF JOY.

THE true character of God cannot be properly known, without pleasure of a very refined and exquisite kind. There is "joy and peace in believing." All the religious affections are delightful ; and in "keeping God's commandments there is great reward." Wisdom is but another name for religion ; "wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Necessarily connected with true religion, is the enjoyment of the divine favour, conformity to the divine image, and intercourse and fellowship with God ; and then, beyond death and the grave, for religion is secured a happiness, wide as our wishes, lasting as our souls. Oh ! who can tell, who can conceive, what it is "to see God face to face—to be like him"—to be filled with joy from his countenance—to be with Christ—to behold his glory—to sit on his throne—and to enter into his joy ;—and, to crown all, to be for ever with the Lord.

THE DESIGN OF GOD IN THE WORKS OF
CREATION AND PROVIDENCE.

As God made man for religion, so the great object he had in view in the other works of his hands, so far as man is concerned, was to furnish him with the means of religion. What is the design of all the wonderful works of God, "in the heaven above, and in the earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth?" Why are those skies bright with his glory, and those fields vocal with his praise? Why, but to communicate to man religious knowledge, and excite in him religious affection? Why, but to tell him, that God is infinitely great, and wise, and powerful, and good, and to urge him to love, and fear, and trust in Him. What is the design of all God's providential dispensations, both to individuals and nations—both in the physical and moral worlds? Why does he uphold all things by the word of his power? Why does his kingdom rule over all, but that his character may be displayed, and that this display of his character may lead men to think, and feel, and act in reference to him as they ought? But this is by no means the most extraordinary part of the divine dispensations, which have for their object to awaken religion in the mind of man. To gain this end, he has formed and executed a scheme of operations, which is of all his wonderful works the most wonderful. Why did he give man a revelation of his will, confirmed by so many and so astonishing miracles? Why did he inspire the prophets to make known his oracles? Why did he descend in such awful majesty on the summit of Sinai? Why did "God become manifest in

the flesh?" Why did the Only Begotten become "the man Christ Jesus?" Why did he live a life of sorrow, and die a death of shame? What mean the mysteries of Bethlehem, and Gethsemane, and Calvary? What mean the glories of the transfiguration, and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost? Why did he establish, and so wonderfully preserve his church in the world? What was the end of all these astonishing transactions, but the making men religious? Pursue in your own minds the track of thought that has now been opened to you, and you must be overwhelmed with a sense of the prodigious importance of religion. That which has employed so many of the thoughts of Him "who alone hath wisdom," must be inconceivably important. What can place in a clearer point of view at once the value of religion, and the portentous and shocking combination of folly and presumption exhibited in the character and conduct of those who count that unworthy of occupying the chief, or indeed any place in their minds and pursuits, which has been one grand object in the divine counsels and operations, from the beginning ages of eternity to the present hour?

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.

LET us diligently strive to walk with God; and let our souls be so influenced and trained, that we may both rightly apprehend him, and always acknowledge his presence; not without holy fear and an earnest desire of the divine approbation. Let us appropriate him to ourselves by a lively faith; let us hold converse with him

daily; let us consult him in all our difficulties, and make earnest application to him in all our necessities; let us securely rely on his providence; let us gratefully recollect all his mercies; let us enjoy him alone in all good things; let us exercise ourselves in the pious practice of a holy obedience, as well with respect to those sacred solemnities which have a more immediate relation to his worship, as with respect to the duties incumbent on us in our particular callings; carefully avoiding whatsoever may in any measure displease him; and immediately endeavouring, by a speedy repentance, to recover his favour, which, by our manifold sins, we had worthily deserved to lose. Let us sincerely refer ourselves and all our actions to his glory; let us surrender up ourselves and all we have to him; let us never cease from earnestly seeking a more full enjoyment of him; yea, and let us walk with him alone, rejecting with scorn and disdain the fellowship of the world. Let us move on with him, not loitering or wandering out of the way; and lastly, let us walk with the God of our salvation cheerfully, constantly, and with perseverance. And then Enoch's motion will at length assuredly happily conduct us to Enoch's rest, even to eternal glory.

ATHEISM.

THE intelligence requisite for a rational denial of a God, involves the very attributes of Divinity; for unless the atheist is omnipresent—unless he is at this moment in every place in the universe, he cannot know but there may be in some place manifestations of a Deity, by which even

He would be overpowered. If he does not know absolutely every agent in the universe, the one that he does not know may be God. If he is not himself the chief agent in the universe, and does not know what is so, that which is so may be God. If he is not in absolute possession of all the propositions that constitute universal truth, the one which he wants may be, that there is a God. If he cannot with certainty assign the cause of all that he perceives to exist, that cause may be a God. If he does not know every thing that has been done in the immeasurable ages that are past, some things may have been done by a God. Thus, unless he knows all things, that is, precludes another Deity, by being one himself, he cannot know that the Being whose existence he rejects, does not exist.

The causes of atheism are, divisions in religion, if there be many; for any one main division addeth zeal to both sides, but many divisions introduce atheism. Another is, scandal of priests, when it is come to that which S. Bernard saith, "*non est jam dicere, ut populus, sic sacerdos; quia nec sic populus, ut sacerdos.*" A third is, a custom of profane scoffing in holy matters, which doth by little and little deface the reverence of religion. And, lastly, learned times, especially with peace and prosperity; for troubles and adversities do more bow men's minds to religion. They that deny a God destroy man's nobility; for certainly man is of kin to the beasts by his body; and if he be not of kin to God by his spirit, he is a base and ignoble creature. It destroys likewise magnanimity, and the raising of human nature; for take an example of

a dog, and mark what a generosity and courage he will put on when he finds himself maintained by a man, who to him is instead of a God, or "melior natura;" which courage is manifestly such as that creature, without that confidence of a better nature than his own, could never attain. So man, when he resteth and assureth himself upon divine protection and favour, gathereth a force and faith which human nature in itself could not obtain; therefore, as atheism is in all respects hateful, so in this, that it depriveth human nature of the means to exalt itself above human frailty.

THE SECRETS OF GOD NOT KNOWN BY SPECULATION.

WE are nowhere commanded to pry into the secrets of God; but the wholesome counsel and advice given to us is this, "to make our calling and election sure." We have no warrant in Scripture to peep in these hidden rolls and volumes of eternity; and to make it our first object, when we come to Christ, to spell out our names in the stars; and to persuade ourselves, that we are certainly elected to everlasting happiness, before we see the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness, shaped in our hearts. God's everlasting decree is too dazzling and bright an object, for us to set our eye upon. It is far easier and safer for us, to look upon the rays of his goodness and holiness, as they are reflected in our hearts; and there to read the mild and gentle characters of God's love to us, in our love to him and our hearty compliance with his

heavenly will : as it is safer for us, if we would see the sun, to look upon it here below in a pail of water, than to cast up our daring eyes upon the body of the sun itself, which is too radiant and scorching for us. The best assurance that any one can have of his interest in God, is, doubtless, the conformity of his soul to God. Those divine purposes, whatsoever they may be, are altogether unsearchable and unknowable : they lie wrapped up in everlasting darkness, and covered in a deep abyss. Who is able to fathom the bottom of them ?

A good conscience is the best looking-glass of heaven ; in which the soul may see God's thoughts and purposes concerning it, reflected as so many shining stars.

He that endeavours really to mortify his passions, and in his life to comply with that truth which his conscience is convinced of, is nearer a Christian, though he never heard of Christ, than he who believes all the common articles of the Christian faith, and plainly denies Christ in his life.

It is a piece of that corruption which runs through human nature, that we naturally prize truth, more than goodness ; knowledge more than holiness. We think it a gallant thing, to be fluttering up to heaven with our wings of knowledge and speculation ; whereas, the highest mystery of a divine life here, and of perfect happiness hereafter, consists in nothing but mere obedience to the Divine will. Happiness is nothing but

that inward sweet delight, which will arise from the harmonious agreement between our wills and the will of God.

LIKENESS TO GOD NECESSARY TO HIS
FRIENDSHIP.

God, who is absolute goodness, cannot love any of his creatures, and take pleasure in them, without bestowing upon them a communication of his goodness and likeness. God cannot make a Gospel, to promise men life and happiness hereafter without being regenerated, and made partakers of his holiness. As soon may heaven and hell be reconciled, and lovingly shake hands with one another, as God can be fondly indulgent to any sin, in whomsoever it be. As soon may light and darkness be espoused together, and midnight be married to noon-day, as God can be joined in a league of friendship with any wicked soul.

And this is a greater grace of God to us, than the former, which still go both together in the Gospel; first, the free remission and pardon of sin in the blood of Christ, then, delivering us from the power of sin, by the Spirit of Christ dwelling in our hearts.

Christ came not into the world merely to cast a mantle over us, and hide all our filthy sores from God's avenging eye, with his merits and righteousness; but he came especially to be a surgeon and physician of souls, to free us from the filth and corruption of them; which is more

grievous and burthensome, more noisesome to a true Christian, than the guilt of sin itself.

Should a poor wretched and diseased creature, full of sores and ulcers, be covered all over with purple, or clothed with scarlet, he would take but little contentment in it, whilst his sores and wounds remain upon him; and he had much rather be arrayed in rags, so that he might obtain but soundness and health within. The Gospel is a true Bethesda, a pool of grace, where such poor, lame, and infirm creatures as we are, upon the moving of God's Spirit, may descend down, not only to wash our skin and outside, but also to be cured of our diseases within. And, whatever the world thinks, there is a powerful Spirit that moves upon these waters, the waters of the Gospel, spreading its gentle, healing, quickening wings over our souls. The Gospel is not like Abana and Pharpar, those common rivers of Damascus, that could only cleanse the outside: it is a true Jordan, in which such leprous Naamans as we all are, "may wash and be clean."—"Blessed, indeed, are they, whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered: blessed is the man, to whom the Lord will not impute sin;" but yet, rather blessed are they, whose sins are like a morning cloud, and quite taken away from them. Blessed, thrice "blessed are they, that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied: blessed are the poor in heart, for they shall see God."

THE TESTIMONY OF A PHILOSOPHER.

I HAVE known what the enjoyments and advantages of this life are, and what the more refined pleasures which learning and intellectual power can bestow, and with all the experience that more than threescore years can give, I now, on the eve of my departure, declare to you, (and earnestly pray that you may hereafter live and act on the conviction,) that health is a great blessing; competence, obtained by honourable industry, a great blessing; and a great blessing it is to have kind, faithful, and loving friends and relatives—but the greatest of all blessings, as it is the most ennobling of all privileges, is to be indeed a Christian. But I have been likewise, through a large portion of my later life, a sufferer sorely afflicted with bodily pains, languor, and manifold infirmities; and for the last three or four years have, with few and brief intervals, been confined to a sick room, and at this moment, in great weakness and heaviness, write from a sick bed, hopeless of recovery, yet without prospect of a speedy removal. And I thus, on the brink of the grave, solemnly bear witness to you, that the Almighty Redeemer, most gracious in his promises to them that truly seek him, is faithful to perform what he has promised; and has reserved, under all my pains and infirmities, the inward peace that passeth all understanding, with the supporting assurance of a reconciled God, who will not withdraw his spirit from me in the conflict, and in his own time will *deliver* me from the evil one.

Eminently blessed are they who begin *early* to seek, fear, and love their God, trusting wholly

in the righteousness and mediation of their Lord, Redeemer, Saviour, and everlasting High Priest, Jesus Christ.

SHORT SENTENCES.

It is one of the striking characters of the Omnipotent, that he is strong and patient. It is a standing evidence of his patience, that he is provoked every day. How beautifully do these characters reflect lustre upon each other! If he were not strong, his patience would want its distinguishing perfection. If he were not patient, his strength would instantly crush those who provoke him, not sometimes, but often; not every year, but every day.

God blotteth out transgressions, aggravated and innumerable, as easily, and as completely, as the wind sweeps away a floating cloud from the face of the sky.

God hides himself and his providence, behind second causes.

The Creator is to be first loved for his own sake, for his infinite goodness and perfections; and then the creature, as his work, and in proportion to its resemblance to him.

It is observable, that, when God would show his power, he makes a world: when he would manifest his justice, he prepares a tophet; when he would manifest his wisdom, he finds out a

Mediator ; but when he would proclaim his love, he gave his Son to sufferings and to death.

What can we wish for in an heritage that is not to be found in God ? Would we have large possessions ? He is immensity. Would we have a sure estate ? He is immutability. Would we have a term of long continuance ? He is eternity itself.

The presence of God's glory is in heaven, the presence of his power on earth, the presence of his justice in hell, and the presence of his grace with his people. If he deny us his powerful presence, we fall into nothing ; if he deny us his gracious presence, we fall into sin ; if he deny us his merciful presence, we fall into hell.

Fear God for his power—trust him for his wisdom—love him for his goodness—praise him for his greatness—believe him for his faithfulness—and adore him for his holiness

HOLY SCRIPTURES.

THE veneration we shall feel for the Bible, as the depository of saving knowledge, will be totally distinct, not only from what we attach to any other book, but from that admiration its other properties inspire ; and the variety and antiquity of its history, the light it affords in various researches, its inimitable touches of nature, together with the sublimity and beauty so copiously poured over its pages, will be deemed subsidia-

ry ornaments, the embellishments of the casket, which contains the "pearl of great price."

Upon every reading of the Bible, it grows more precious to the Christian, as it did to David; because it is not only the discovery, but it is become also the conveyance of the unsearchable riches of Christ. These are revealed in the word, and applied by the word. Faith is the lawful key, which opens the infinite treasury, and here is the proclamation of grace: "O ye that are seeking durable riches—these—all these are yours—Come, take all you want—use all you wish." You cannot do the free Giver a greater favour, than to enrich yourselves daily out of his boundless stores. Read his promises, how exceeding great, how exceeding precious they are. Read his faithfulness to them—only trust—take—use—all that is in the promises shall be yours in time; yea, yours in eternity."

INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES.

SEARCH diligently the word of eternal life enriched and ennobled as it is with the chain and the accomplishments of its prophecies; with the splendour of its miracles; with the attestation of its martyrs; the consistency of its doctrines; the importance of its facts; the plenitude of its precepts; the treasury of its promises; the irradiations of the Spirit; the abundance of its consolations; the proportion of its parts; the symmetry of the whole altogether presenting such a fund of instruction to the mind, of light to the path,

of document to the conduct, of satisfaction to the heart, as demonstrably prove it to be the instrument of God for the salvation of man.

FOUR GRAND ARGUMENTS FOR THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE.

THERE are four grand arguments for the truth of the Bible; the miracles it records, the prophecies, the goodness of the doctrine, and the moral character of the penmen.

The miracles flow from divine power; the prophecies from divine understanding; the excellence of the doctrine from divine goodness; and the moral character of the penmen from divine purity. Thus Christianity is built upon these four immovable pillars, the power, the understanding, the goodness, and the purity of God. I add farther; the Bible must be the invention, either of good men or angels, bad men or devils, or of God.

It could not be the invention of good men or angels; for they neither would nor could make a book, and tell lies all the time they were writing it, saying, "Thus saith the Lord," when it was their own invention.

It could not be the invention of bad men or devils; for they would not make a book, which commands all duty, forbids all sin, and condemns their souls to hell to all eternity.

I therefore draw this conclusion, the Bible must be given by divine inspiration.

**THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPELS ARGUED FROM
THE CHARACTER OF THE EVANGELISTS.**

THE evangelists were plain, honest, artless, unlearned men, in very humble occupations of life, and utterly incapable of inventing or carrying on such a refined and complicated system of fraud, as the Christian religion must have been, if it was not true. There are, besides, the strongest marks of fairness, candour, simplicity, and truth, throughout the whole of their narratives. Their greatest enemies have never attempted to throw the least stain upon their characters; and how then can they be supposed capable of so gross an imposition, as that of asserting and propagating the most impudent fiction? They could gain by it neither pleasure, profit, nor power. On the contrary, it brought upon them the most dreadful evils, and even death itself. If, therefore, they were cheats, they were cheats without any motive; and without any advantage; nay, contrary to every motive and every advantage that usually influences the actions of men. They preached a religion which forbids falsehood, under pain of eternal punishment; and yet, on this supposition, they supported that religion by falsehood; and whilst they were guilty of the basest and most useless knavery themselves, they were taking infinite pains, and going through the greatest labour and sufferings, in order to teach honesty to all mankind. Is this credible? Is this possible? Is not this a mode of acting so contrary to all experience, to all the principles of human nature, and to all the usual motives of

human conduct, as to exceed the utmost bounds of belief, and to compel every reasonable man to reject at once so monstrous a supposition ?

THE APOSTLE PAUL A GENUINE BELIEVER.

ST. PAUL could have no rational motive to become a disciple of Christ, unless he sincerely believed in him : that whereas it may be objected to the other apostles, by those who are resolved not to credit their testimony, that having been deeply engaged with Jesus during his life, they were obliged to continue the same professions after his death, for the support of their own credit, and from having gone too far to go back ; this can by no means be said of St. Paul. On the contrary, whatever force there may be in that way of reasoning, it all tends to convince us, that St. Paul must naturally have continued a Jew, and an enemy of Christ Jesus. If they were engaged on one side, he was as strongly engaged on the other. If shame withheld them from changing sides, much more ought it to have stopt him, who, being of a much higher education and rank in life than they, had more credit to lose, and must be supposed to have been vastly more sensible to that sort of shame. The only difference was, that they, by quitting their Master after his death, might have preserved themselves ; whereas he, by quitting the Jews, and taking up the cross of Christ, certainly brought on his own destruction.

As, therefore, no rational motive appears for St. Paul's embracing the faith of Christ, without having been really convinced of the truth of it ; but, on the contrary, every thing occurred to deter

him from acting that part, one might very justly conclude, that when a man of his understanding embraced that faith, he was in reality convinced of the truth of it, and that, by consequence, he was not an impostor, who said what he knew to be false, with an intent to deceive.

ST. PAUL AT ATHENS.

THERE are at this present moment more than six hundred millions of the human race in the appalling situation of the men whom the apostle describes as "without Christ in the world:" and the question is, with what feelings and what purposes a Christian would survey this vast and wretched portion of the family of man. Behold St. Paul at Athens. Think of the matchless splendour which blazed upon his view, as he rolled his eye round the enchanting panorama that encircled the hill of Mars. On the one hand, as he stood upon the summit of the rock, beneath the canopy of heaven, was spread a glorious prospect of mountains, islands, seas, and skies; on the other, quite within his view, was the plain of Marathon, where the wrecks of former generations, and the tombs of departed heroes, mingled together in silent desolation. Behind him towered the lofty Acropolis, crowned with the pride of Grecian architecture.—There, in the zenith of their splendour and the perfection of their beauty, stood those peerless temples, the very fragments of which are viewed by modern travellers with an idolatry almost equal to that which reared them. Stretched along the plain below him, and reclining her head on the

slope of the neighbouring hills, was Athens, mother of the arts and sciences, with her noble offspring sporting by her side. The Porch, the Lyceum, and the Grove, with the stations of departed sages, and the forms of their living disciples, were all presented to the apostle's eye.

What mind, possessing the slightest pretensions to classic taste, can think of his situation amid such sublime and captivating scenery, without a momentary rapture? Yet there, even there, did this accomplished scholar stand as insensible to all this grandeur, as if nothing was before him but the treeless, turfless desert. Absorbed in the holy attractions of his own mind, he saw no charms, felt no fascinations, but on the contrary, was pierced with the most poignant distress; and what was the cause? "He saw the city *wholly given to idolatry*." To him it presented nothing but a magnificent mausoleum, decorated, it is true, with the richest productions of the sculptor and the architect, but still where the souls of men lay dead in trespasses and sins; while the dim light of philosophy that still glimmered in the schools, appeared but as the lamp of the sepulchre, shedding its pale and sickly ray around these gorgeous chambers of death.

What must have been his indignant grief at the dishonour done by idolatry to God; what his amazement at the weakness and folly of the human mind; what his abhorrence of human impiety; and what his compassion for human wretchedness, when such stately monuments of Pagan pomp and superstition had not the smallest possible effect in turning away his view from the guilt that raised them, or the misery which succeeded them!

Ah! how many Christian travellers and divines, whilst occupying the same spots, though they saw not a thousandth part of what the apostle saw, have had their whole minds so engrossed by scenes of earthly magnificence, as not to feel one sentiment of pity for the Pagans who formerly dwelt there, or the Mahometans who are the present proprietors of those venerable ruins!

PECULIAR CHARACTER OF THE SCRIPTURES.

WHAT seems the peculiar character of the scriptures is, their continual introduction of the Deity, and their incessant aim to produce, preserve, and revive the impression of him on the mind and heart of the reader. Other histories present us with views of nature and art. We see in them abundant instances of human skill and human power; and if these seem insufficient to account for an event, the deficiency is supplied by the operations of chance. In the Bible alone, the divine Being possesses in full the glory of his own works, and evidently appears to govern the world. If the thunder roars, it is the voice of God. If the prudence, industry, and integrity of Joseph, procure him the favour of his Egyptian master, it is the Lord that prospers him. If the Babylonish tyrant satiates his ambition and cruelty at the expense of the surrounding nations, he is the "overflowing scourge" in the hand of Jehovah to punish the sins of these nations. If the Persian monarch displays his wisdom and generosity in restoring the Jews to their own country, the Lord stirs up his heart for that purpose. Nor is the Deity introduced as by a hea-

then poet, for the sake of ornament, or to dignify a human hero ; but as a real agent, and as the prominent character. Thus the "Great Invisible" is exhibited as it were to our senses, not occasionally, but continually. We are made to feel that in "Him we live, and move, and have our being." "He compasses us behind and before, and lays his hand upon us."

BENEFITS OF A PARTIAL REVELATION.

It need not be thought surprising, that the same narrow horizon which limits our view in all our concerns on earth, should confine our prospect when it is directed towards heaven. If we search for the attributes of the Creator by the light which the natural world affords, we see the rays of goodness and justice emerging from his throne, though their lustre is partially obscured by clouds and darkness. In proceeding from natural religion to revelation, we find enough to assure us of its certainty, but too little to satisfy our curiosity : we see but a part of the scheme in which we are included, its final object being enveloped in mystery. But this imperfection, instead of giving birth to sceptical murmurs, may be improved to a beneficial purpose, if it has its intended effect of reminding us, that the state we are now passing through is initiatory, not final—is a trial, a warfare, a pilgrimage ; but that we must look upward to an eternal habitation for that unclouded light which may be one of the purest rewards of constant and victorious virtue.

THE CREEDS OR SYMBOLS OF BELIEF IN THE
NEW TESTAMENT, EXPRESSED IN FEW
WORDS.

If we observe the creeds or symbols of belief that are in the New Testament, we shall find them very short. "Lord, I believe that thou art the Son of God who was to come into the world;"—that was Martha's creed. "Thou art Christ the Son of the living God;"—that was Peter's creed. "We know and believe that thou art Christ the Son of the living God;"—that was the creed of all the apostles. "This is life eternal, that they may know thee the only true God; and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent;"—that was the creed which our blessed Lord himself propounded. And again, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, yea, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and he that liveth and believeth in me, shall not die for ever;"—that was the catechism that Christ made for Martha, and questioned her upon the article, "Believest thou this?" and this belief was the end of the gospel, and in sufficient perfect order to eternal life. For so St. John, "These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. For this is the word of faith which we preach, namely, if you with the mouth confess Jesus to be the Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved."—That is the Christian's creed. "For I have resolved to know nothing amongst you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified; that in us ye may learn not to be wise above that which

is written, that ye may not be puffed up for another, one against another."—That was St. Paul's creed, and that which he recommends to the church of Rome, to prevent pride, and faction, and schism.

BEAUTIES OF THE PSALMS.

THE fairest productions of human wit, after a few perusals, like gathered flowers, wither in our hands and lose their fragrancý; but these unfading plants of paradise become, as we are accustomed to them, still more and more beautiful; their bloom appears to be daily heightened; fresh odours are emitted, and new sweets are extracted from them. He who hath once tasted their excellencies, will desire to taste them yet again; and he who tastes them oftenest, will relish them best.

FOLLY OF INFIDELITY IN ATTEMPTING TO DESTROY THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE.

AND is it possible that you (Paine) should think so highly of your performance, as to believe, that you have thereby demolished the authority of a Book, which Newton himself esteemed the most authentic of all histories; which, by its celestial light, illumines the darkest ages of antiquity; which is the touchstone whereby we are enabled to distinguish between true and fabulous theology, between the God of Israel, holy, just, and good, and the impure rabble of heathen Baalim;—

which has been thought, by competent judges, to have afforded matter for the laws of Solon, and a foundation for the philosophy of Plato;—which has been illustrated by the labour of learning, in all ages and countries;—and been admired and venerated for its piety, its sublimity, its veracity, by all who were able to read and understand it? No, sir; you have gone, indeed, through the wood, with the best intention in the world to cut it down; but you have merely busied yourself in exposing to vulgar contempt a few unsightly shrubs which good men had wisely concealed from public view; you have entangled yourself in thickets of thorns and briers; you have lost your way on the mountains of Lebanon; the goodly cedar trees whereof, lamenting the madness, and pitying the blindness of your rage against them, have scorned the blunt edge, and the base temper of your axe, and laughed unhurt, at the feebleness of your stroke. The Bible has withstood the learning of Porphyry, and the power of Julian; to say nothing of the Manichean Faustus. It has resisted the genius of Bolingbroke, and the wit of Voltaire; to say nothing of a numerous herd of inferior assailants; and it will not fall by your force. You have barbed anew the blunted arrows of former adversaries; you have feathered them with blasphemy and ridicule; dipped them in your deadliest poison; aimed them with your utmost skill; shot them against the shield of faith with your utmost vigour; but, like the feeble javelin of aged Priam, they will scarcely reach the mark—will fall to the ground without a stroke.

THE GUILT OF NEGLECTING THE BIBLE.

BUT amidst the unnumbered talents that are distributed on earth, there is one which, in point of real value, holds a pre-eminent and distinguished place. That talent is—the Record of Heaven—the Gospel of the Son of God. It is by virtue of this talent we are taught the relative importance of every other one, and are brought to fix the paramount claims of the Divine Author of all our mercies. Awful, indeed, is the responsibility which this bestowment involves! It were better never to have been born, than to be guilty of abusing it. Salvation slighted, will issue in the final overthrow of our happiness—in the eternal ruin of our souls. The possession of this talent heightens the value, and augments the responsibility of every other one. It sheds light on all the relations of time, and exhibits them in their solemn connexion with eternity.

SHORT SENTENCES.

THE Scriptures teach us the best way of living, the noblest way of suffering, and the most comfortable way of dying.

GOD has given us four books:—the Book of Grace, the Book of Nature, the Book of the World, and the Book of Providence. Every occurrence is a leaf in one of these books. It does not become us to be negligent in the use of any of them.

ONE way of reading the Bible with advantage is to pay it great homage ; so that when we come to any part which we cannot connect with other passages, we must conclude that this arises from our ignorance, but that the seeming contrarieties are in themselves quite reconcilable.

A sagacious discerner would think every letter of the Lamentations, and part of the prophecy of Jeremiah, written with a tear ; every word, the sound of a breaking heart ; and the writer a man of sorrows, who scarce ever breathed but in sighs, or spoke but in groans.

FAITH.

THE true faith of our religion is in that state of mind which a distinct apprehension of our present relations to God, and their future consequences, beyond all importance of worldly things, hath arrested and impressed. That the angry Almighty became a man, that Himself might be our Saviour from destruction, is the paramount relation, and on which the very present existence of the world depends ; and, therefore, well may the faith of our religion be distinctively termed faith in Christ,—the same impressed mind where the trembling and humility of men escaping from destruction, as the little bird flies low and cowering and with a half chirrup of gladness from the hand of the fowler, are just passing into joy unbounded ; where together, in the hope and fear of futurity, they become parts of the same love. And love is exalted,—an admiration, a gratitude,

—to the point, where, in all our actions, we would beware disregard to his injunctions who hath become our Redcemer; and more, would sacrifice all for his glory.

SELF-ESTIMATION REPROVED.

We may walk forth with the beauty of earth beneath our feet, and the star of heaven in our eye; and our souls consent to the loveliness of organized nature; and our hearts overflow with silent worship of the Great Author;—but this is not enough; and there is neither power of instruction, nor example, nor hope, nor fear, sufficient, in such exercises of moral intellect, to raise the prostrate world from its debased conditions. There is a better calculation in Christianity for poor man, above the pity or contempt of vain intellects, or the generous efforts of the more truly wise. It waits for no conditions of wisdom or greatness. It takes not the bold speculator on the heights of natural religion first by the hand, nor hails him the greatest favourite of Heaven. It defies his calculations of merit. It oversteps the control of circumstances. The dungeon and the lazar-house, and the purlieus of lowest humanity, it searches for the contrite heart; and raises it to a higher gratitude than of natural religion, and the capacity of a greater moral worth. A rainbow on the dim tears of the penitent, and an immortal hope in his heart;—he rises above the anxieties of low care and his former sins, a new man, more sublime, in his change, than Brutus of old when he threw aside his idiocy and disenthralled Rome. It is the re-

redemption of those who can least help themselves ; of the most despised soul from the meanest pollution ; and stripping it of its vile accompaniments, it purifies it more and more, and at last places it in the bright jewellery of the sainted heavens.

NOTHING ABOUT THE SOUL UNIMPORTANT.

THERE is, in the slightest motion of the meanest soul, something worthy of attention beyond all the aspects of the congregated stars, and more sublime a thousand fold ; because, disregarded at present, it is part, causal or indicative, of an incalculable future magnitude,—a thing over which the great final judgment is to be held,—worthy of the approbation or formal denunciation of God and the consentaneous verdict of archangels, swelling in consequences of woe or joy through all eternity, when the planets, to which philosophers look more earnestly now, are extinguished or forgotten in their spheres. That over the being before us hangs an awful judgment, to himself and us uncertain whether of acquittal or condemnation, invests him with a sacred and solemn interest ; and, as in the case of all criminals, denies him to a sneer. And who shall sneer ? Not surely he who is going before the same tribunal for a participation in the same crimes ? Eternity laughs at the little distinctions of earth ; and long ere an eternity of woe could go by, the proudest intellects in its dark kingdom must find themselves but on a level with the meanest.

CHRISTIANITY FOUNDED ON FACTS.

WHEN the Almighty was pleased to introduce, by the advent of the Messiah, a more perfect and permanent economy of religion, he founded it entirely on facts, attested by the most unexceptionable evidence, and the most splendid miracles. The apostles were witnesses, who, by the signs and wonders they wrought, made that appeal to the senses of men, which had been previously made to their own, and the doctrines which they taught in their writings, were little more than natural consequences resulting from the undoubted truth of their testimony. If they wish to inculcate the doctrine of a resurrection and future judgment, they deem it sufficient to appeal to the fact of Christ's resurrection, and session at the right hand of God. They present no evidence of a future state, except what ultimately terminates in the person of the Saviour, as the first begotten from the dead; and most anxiously warn us against resting our hope of salvation on any other basis than that of a sensible sacrifice, "the offering of the body of Christ once for all." Thus whatever is sublime and consolatory in the Christian religion, originates in facts and events which appealed to the senses, and passed in this visible theatre, though their ultimate result is commensurate with eternity. In order to rescue us from the idolatry of the creature, and the dominion of the senses, he who is intimately acquainted with our frame, makes use of sensible appearances, and causes his Son to become flesh, and to pitch his tent amongst us, that by faith in his crucified humanity, we may ascend, as by a mystic ladder, to the abode of the Eternal.

CHRISTIANITY THE BEST SYSTEM OF ETHICS.

THE efficiency of the salvation which Christ accomplished, to deliver men from the guilt of sin, shall be seen in the result of the faithful preaching of the Gospel, when compared with any other scheme, that all the talent and all the application of men can invent. Philosophers may try to regenerate a nation, a neighbourhood, a family, or an individual; and moralists may try to reform them. They will work in vain. Crime, robed in every possible character of deformity, and blood shed under every circumstance of horror, and accomplished villany buoyed up with every feeling of pride and self-righteousness, have been too plainly seen to be the legitimate results of that "philosophy falsely so called," which forsakes the guidance of revelation. And as to the moralist, even though he take with him a certain portion of the Christian religion, and teach that as a divine system of morals, which ought to be taught as a system of divine grace; or as a system of reward on sincere obedience, and not as the system of justification by faith; we have now, on every side, sufficient and melancholy proof, that notwithstanding his best efforts, the people may and will decline from every good way; that a general corruption of manners may and will prevail, against whose overwhelming tide the voice of moral suasion will be raised in vain, and the daily aggravating deluge will threaten with speedy desolation a once fair and promising land, and every safeguard which such a heartless and unauthorized system can rear round the altar and the throne. But the faithful servants of the living God, and of his Christ, go forth armed only

with the pure and heavenly weapons of Gospel mercy, and the result shall vindicate the truth of God. Let the missionary hasten to the polluted savage of Taheite, or the worshippers of devils on the Bullom shore, or to the civilized, though blood-stained votary of Juggernaut, or the high-minded servant of the false prophet; and let him declare in Christ Jesus, "the righteousness of God, for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;" and this word shall be effectual—the sinner shall receive it, shall believe, shall be reclaimed, and sanctified, and comforted.

CHRISTIANITY THE TRUE RELIGION.

I SEE many contrary religions, all of which must be false but one. Each of them claims credit upon its own authority, and deals out its threatenings against all who disbelieve it. I do not therefore take them at their word. For they can all do alike in this respect, just as every man can call himself a prophet. But in Christianity I see the accomplishment of prophecies, and an infinite number of miracles, attested beyond all reasonable doubt, and these I find in no other religion.

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY.

PRACTICAL Christianity may be comprised in three words; devotion, self-government, and benevolence. The love of God in the heart is a fountain from which these three streams of virtue

will not fail to issue. The love of God also is a guard against error in conduct, because it is a guard against those evil influences which mislead the understanding in moral questions. In some measure, it supplies the place of every rule. He who has it truly within him, has little to learn.

Look steadfastly to the will of God, which he who loves God necessarily does; practise what you believe to be well-pleasing to him, leave off what you believe to be displeasing to him; cherish, confirm, strengthen the principle itself which sustains this course of external conduct, and you will not want many lessons, you need not listen to any other monitor.

The behaviour or practice of every man who is vitally united to the holy Jesus, is universally conformed to the law as a rule of duty. Such a holy practice is the grand business of his life; the business in which he is chiefly engaged, and which he pursues with more earnestness and diligence than he does any other. His understanding is divinely enlightened, to see the transcendent beauty of holiness; his will is renewed to choose holiness, and his affections are sanctified to love, desire, and delight in it. He is also constrained by the love, commanded by the law, and enabled by the spirit of Christ, to be "holy in all manner of conversation." He therefore makes the constant practice of universal holiness his choice, his delight, and in an eminent degree his employment. Relying on the righteousness of Jesus Christ for all his title to eternal life, trusting in Christ for continual supplies of grace, and aiming in all his performances at the glory of

God; he perseveres through all changes, and under all trials, in the love and practice of universal holiness, to the end of life.

SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY.

CHRISTIANITY breathes nothing of the malignity of national prejudice, or the exclusive spirit of a rancorous bigotry. Its spirit is that of unlimited benevolence, and its employment is to do good to all. O that those who are disgusted with it as disfigured by the trappings of superstition, and breathing the fury of intolerance, would turn their eyes to it as it appears over the plains of Bethlehem! pure and benign as the angel who proclaimed it, and announcing peace on earth, and good will to men.

CONSOLATIONS OF CHRISTIANITY.

CHRISTIANITY offers even to the irreligious, who relent amidst their sufferings, the alleviation springing from inestimable promises made to penitence; any other system, which should attempt to console them, simply as suffering, and without any reference to the moral and religious state of their minds, would be mischievous, if it were not inefficacious. What are the principal sources of consolation to the pious, is immediately apparent. The victim of sorrow is assured, that God exercises his paternal wisdom and kindness in afflicting his children; that this necessary discipline is to refine and exalt them, by making them "partakers of his holiness;" that he mer-

cifully regards their weakness and pains, and will not let them suffer beyond what they shall be able to bear; that their great Leader has suffered for them more than they can suffer, and kindly sympathizes still; that this short life was not meant so much to give them joy, as to prepare them for it; and that patient constancy shall receive a resplendent crown. An aged Christian is soothed by the assurance, that his almighty Friend will not despise the enfeebled exertions, nor desert the oppressed and fainting weakness of the last stage of his servant's life. When advancing into the shade of death itself, he is animated by the faith that the Great Sacrifice has taken the malignity of death away; and that the divine presence will attend the dark steps of this last and lonely enterprise, and show the dying traveller and hero that even this melancholy gloom is the very confine of paradise, the immediate access to the region of eternal life.

SEED-TIME.

YOUTH is the spring of life; and by this will be determined the glory of summer, the abundance of autumn, the provision of winter. It is the morning of life; and if the Sun of Righteousness does not dispel the moral mists and fogs before noon, the whole day generally remains overspread and gloomy. It is the seed-time; and "what a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Every thing of importance is affected by religion in this period of life.

RELIGION AN ACTIVE PRINCIPLE.

THE great care of the man who is content with the form of godliness without the power, is, that every thing should be right without ; while the true Christian is most careful that every thing should be right within. It would be nothing to him to be applauded by the whole world, if he had not the approbation of God and his own conscience. Real religion is, therefore, a living principle. Any one may make a show, and be called a Christian, and unite himself to a sect, and be admired : but for a man to enter into the sanctuary ; to hold secret communion with God ; to retire into his closet, and transact all his affairs with an unseen Saviour ; to walk with God like Enoch, and yet to smite on his breast with the publican, having no confidence in the flesh, and triumphing only in Christ Jesus—these are the life and acts of a new creature

Real religion is a *living* principle in the heart. It is not like our dress, which is put off at night, and put on again during the day ; but it resembles life, which we ever retain both by day and by night, both while we wake and while we sleep. Religion is a vital principle in the soul, and is *constant* in its operation. In order to possess it, we must be born again of the Spirit, and be truly converted to God. Such is the commencement of unfeigned piety in the heart : let us seek above all things to obtain it as our best inheritance.

THE VIRTUES OF IRRELIGIOUS MEN AN
AGGRAVATION OF THEIR GUILT.

If the virtues and accomplishments of nature are at all to be admitted into the controversy between God and man, instead of forming any abatement upon the enormity of our guilt, they stamp upon it the reproach of a still deeper and more determined ingratitude. Let us conceive it possible for a moment, that the beautiful personifications of scripture were all realized ; that the trees of the forest clapped their hands unto God, and that the isles were glad at his presence ; that the little hills shouted on every side, and the valleys covered over with corn sent forth their notes of rejoicing ; that the sun and the moon praised him, and the stars of light joined in the solemn adoration ; that the voice of glory to God was heard from every mountain, and from every water-fall ; and that all nature, animated throughout by the consciousness of a pervading and presiding Deity, burst into one loud and universal song of gratulation. Would not a strain of greater loftiness be heard to ascend from those regions where the all-working God had left the traces of his own immensity, than from the tamer and the humbler scenery of an ordinary landscape ? Would not you look for a gladder acclamation from the fertile field, than from the arid waste, where no character of grandeur made up for the barrenness that was around you ? Would not the goodly tree, compassed about with the glories of its summer foliage, lift up an anthem of louder gratitude than the lowly shrub that grew beneath it ? Would not the flower, from whose leaves every hue of loveliness was reflect-

ed, sent forth a sweeter rapture than the russet weed, which never drew the eye of any admiring passenger? And in a word, wherever you saw the towering eminences of nature, or the garniture of her more rich and beauteous adornments, would it not be there that you looked for the deepest tones of devotion, or there for the tenderest and most exquisite of its melodies?

INFIDELITY.

THERE are certain men who, calling themselves wise men, pretend to have discovered the imposture of our most holy faith. The Bible, with them, is mere fiction, and the tendency of its belief, to wreath the yoke of ignorance and superstition around the necks of their fellow-men. With a generosity quite worthy of their cause, they propose to emancipate us from our debasing thralldom! From what thralldom? From the thralldom of that faith which works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world? from the thralldom of that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord; from the thralldom of the peace of God, which passeth understanding? from the thralldom of a hope of immortality that maketh not ashamed? from the thralldom of a joy unspeakable, and full of glory? From such a thralldom do we wish to be at liberty? No; we are determined, by the grace of God, to glory in the cross of Christ, and to rejoice in his service as the most honourable freedom. Infidelity, like the bird of night, seldom ventures abroad in the full splendour of day, but chooses rather to pursue its course among its native shades. When

going forth, as it often does, under covert of the clouds of night; or when, on some occasions, assuming a bolder attitude of defiance to the truth, we need narrowly to watch its movements, and to beware of those who, prompted by the pride of their heart, bid us join with them in despising the religion of the Bible. In viewing this book as the repository of the faith once delivered to the saints, "we have not followed a cunningly devised fable," but are cherishing a devout regard to "a sure word of prophecy, to which we do well to take heed, as unto a light shining in a dark place."

PRESUMPTION OF MEN IN REFUSING TO BELIEVE WHAT THEY CANNOT COMPREHEND.

THE doctrine of the union of the divine and human natures in the person of Emanuel, is beyond the grasp of human reason; but faith receives it, because it is clearly revealed; and for a man to reject a doctrine of revelation, merely because it is beyond the grasp of his reason, is folly and presumption in the extreme, for it is saying in effect, that nothing can be true which he cannot comprehend. Pitiful creature! as though his grain of intellect were the standard of mental capacity to the universe, and nothing could be grasped by the Infinite Intelligence which is beyond the reach of his finite powers! Such an one reminds us of the man who had lived all his days in his native valley, and was at length induced to climb one of the neighbouring hills, when, looking abroad on the extended landscape, he exclaimed, "Well, I did not think the world had

been so large before!" And when we ascend to the summits of the everlasting hills, and view the scenery around in the strong light of eternity, we shall perceive the truth is far more extensive, and the intellectual universe more vast than our utmost efforts of imagination had ever pictured them to be.

MINISTRY OF ANGELS.

ALTHOUGH angelic ministry is no longer openly continued, we are nevertheless taught to believe that it exists, and that many of the blessings that fall upon our daily path, are shed from hands which have been lifted amidst the choirs of heaven in holy adoration to the God of all principalities and powers. As Christians ye are come to this "innumerable company of angels;" ye are united to them by a bond which binds together every member of the happy family of God: you are blended with them into one vast and harmonious society. The discordance necessarily subsisting between these pure spirits and the sinful inhabitants of a fallen world is destroyed. Clothed in the merits, and washed in the blood of the Redeemer, you no longer present to them that impurity with which their holy nature could hold no alliance. They perceive, in the redeemed of the Lord, hearts blotted indeed by much imperfection, but yet impelled by the same principles, hopes, tastes, and affections as their own. Your song is at least the faint echo of theirs. Your Father is in every sense of the word their Father; your God is their God. Touched by these considerations, although once

they watched at the gate of the earthly paradise, to prevent our entrance, now they bend from the golden walls of the heavenly city, to invite you to a participation in joys, of which they alone, of all created beings, know the fullness, the intenseness, and the perpetuity.

MAN ORIGINALLY INNOCENT.

PERFECT holiness, Adam doubtless possessed immediately after he was created, and while he continued in the garden of innocence. He knew most intimately the divine law; what he admired he chose, and evinced his choice by the most spotless and ardent obedience. No wrong bias, no corrupt principle disturbed for a moment the harmony of his mind. His affections and passions all pure and spiritual, were ceaseless ministers to the Lord. **LOVE** stood before his altar, and offering her grateful incense, kept up the hallowed flame. **FEAR**, with angel-reverence, bowed down before the sanctuary, where, as yet, no interposing veil had hid the presence of divinity. **HOPE** lifted up her hands and eyes to heaven, and showed by the intenseness of her countenance, where and what she expected to be. **JOY** told her raptures in glad hosannas of praise, and sought on earth to join in those songs which seraphs sing in the celestial mansions. Whilst **MEMORY** unfolded the records of eternal love, and with ecstasy reviewed the glorious past. And **CONSCIENCE**, yet unsullied, stood by, witnessed the sacred service, and gave her approbation as the voice of God.—Such was man in the day when God created him. Knowledge and holi-

ness—the image of God,—all that is great, and all that is excellent, conspired to adorn and sublimiate his soul.

DEPRAVITY OF HUMAN NATURE.

If it is good reasoning to conclude, that a tree which, under all circumstances, and every variety of management, does nevertheless invariably continue to bring forth bad fruit, is itself essentially corrupt and bad, surely it is no less consistent with reason to infer, judging from the general quality of his actions, that “man is of his own nature inclined to evil”—that he is indeed “the degenerate plant of a strange vine;”—moreover, that it requires nothing less than the entire renovation of his nature, to enable him to bring forth fruit pleasing and acceptable to God. If, then, this representation of the real condition of man is true—and that it is true in its principal features, the voice of revelation, and the evidence of facts, incontrovertibly testify—it can answer no beneficial purpose, to quarrel and object against it: rather, is it not our wisdom, frankly and without debate, to admit, in all its force, and to the fullest extent, the humiliating account, in order that we may be thereby led cordially to embrace that wonderful scheme of redemption which is freely proposed to our acceptance, submitting ourselves wholly to that all-sufficient Saviour, “who waiteth to be gracious.”

“What better can we do———

———than prostrate fall

Before him reverent, and there confess

Humbly our faults, and pardon beg with tears?”

MALIGNITY OF SIN.

WERE any one to ask me, what is the worthiest object of our most ardent pursuit, and what we should give the greatest possible diligence to obtain, I should answer, *holiness*, because it comprehends all that is great and good—its end is everlasting life. Were any one again to ask me, what should be our utmost dread, and what we should give the utmost diligence to avoid, I should answer, *sin*, because it comprehends all that is base and wretched, and necessarily excludes us from everlasting life. To the same degree that holiness is beneficial and lovely, sin is pernicious and detestable. It is of essential malignity and ill desert, and will, sooner or later, be seen by all to be the greatest evil with which our nature can be afflicted. Other evils, such as disease and poverty, losses and calumny, affect only what is external and foreign to us, but they need not disturb our minds, nor can they do the least injury to what is truly ourselves; but sin pierces, and wounds, and ravages ourselves. It hurts, not so much the body, the reputation, or fortune, as the man; it plants anguish, desolation, and ruin, in the soul itself. Other evils may, in the end, prove useful to us, but this is eternally and unchangeably evil; the bane of every heart into which it enters, and the destruction of all those who are not rescued from its power, and delivered from its punishment.

HATEFUL NATURE OF SIN.

FROM the scheme of man's redemption we learn that sin must be something far more hateful in its nature, something of a deeper malignity, than is generally understood. It could be no inconsiderable evil that could require such a remedy as the humiliation of the second person in the Godhead. It is not to be supposed, that any light cause would move the merciful Father of the universe to expose even an innocent man to unmerited sufferings. What must be the enormity of that guilt, which God's mercy could not pardon till the only begotten Son of God had undergone its punishment? How great must be the load of crime, which could find no adequate atonement till the Son of God descended from the bosom of the Father, clothed himself with flesh, and being found in fashion as a man, submitted to a life of hardship and contempt, to a death of ignominy and pain?

From this scheme we learn further, that the good or ill conduct of man is a thing of far more importance and concern in the moral system than is generally imagined. Man's deviation from his duty was a disorder, it seems, in the moral system of the universe, for which nothing less than divine wisdom could devise a remedy,—the remedy devised nothing less than divine wisdom and power could apply. Man's disobedience was in the moral world what it would be in the natural, if a planet were to wander from its orbit, or the constellations to start from their appointed seats. It was an evil for which the regular constitution of the world had no cure, which nothing but the immediate interposition of Providence could repair.

FORGIVENESS OF SIN.

THE forgiveness that is with God is such as becomes him—such as is suitable to his greatness, goodness, and other excellencies of his nature—such as, that therein he will be known to be God. What he says concerning some of the works of his providence, “be still, and know that I am God,” may be much more said concerning this great effect of his grace,—still your souls, and know that he is God. It is not like that narrow, difficult, halving, and manacled forgiveness that is found amongst men, when any such thing is found amongst them ; but it is full, free, boundless, bottomless, absolute—such as becomes his nature and excellencies. It is, in a word, forgiveness that is with God, and by the exercise whereof he will be known so to be. If there be any pardon with God, it is such as becomes him to give ;—when he pardons, he will abundantly pardon.—Go with your half-forgiveness, limited, conditional pardons, with reserves and limitations, unto the sons of men ; it may be it may become them—it is like themselves ;—that of God is absolute and perfect, before which our sins are as a cloud before the east wind and the rising sun. Hence he is said to do this work with his whole heart and his whole soul, freely, bountifully, largely, to indulge and forgive unto us our sins, and to cast them unto the bottom of the sea—unto a bottomless ocean, an emblem of infinite mercy.

THE SOUL INVALUABLE.

AN infidel philosopher has observed, that "the damnation of one man is an infinitely greater evil than the subversion of a thousand millions of kingdoms." This is a testimony which he has borne against himself, and against all in every age, who make light of the well-being of that imperishable spirit which the Almighty has breathed into the human frame. "The subversion of a thousand millions of kingdoms!" Ay; he might have converted his kingdoms into worlds, and his thousand millions into countless myriads, and still might he have said, that the damnation of one man is an infinitely greater evil. They are to one immortal soul as less than the small dust of the balance. With all the marks of divine perfection enstamped on them, they have yet no conscious existence—and are susceptible neither of pain nor pleasure—and are but the material instruments which God has created for the gratification or the improvement of the intelligent beings that inhabit them. It is their fate to pass away as if they had never been; but the soul shall endure: and after they shall have been blotted out from the wide expanse of universal nature, as having served the purposes of their formation, the soul shall still survive, and stretch out its existence into everlasting ages, and spend that eternity to which it is destined, either under the burden and the anguish of a just condemnation, or in the enjoyment of exalted, unmingled, and never-ending bliss.

EXCELLENCE OF THE HUMAN MIND.

MIND is the source of all that is great and beautiful, and mind is the proper subject of beauty and of grandeur. It is the infinite mind which, beaming through this material frame, diffuses a radiance over it; and the indications of infinite intelligence, power, and goodness, constitute the beauty and grandeur of the material world. And it is mind in man which recognises these indications, and, like a mirror reflecting the sunbeam, refers them to their great original. What would the noblest conformation of material things, and the most exquisite disposition of their parts, avail to the glory of God, or to any purpose worthy of infinite wisdom, if there were not intelligent beings to experience and appreciate their happy results? It is mind which marks the order, harmony, and consistency of nature; which traces the connexion and design of its parts; which combines them in new associations, and draws from them endless stores of thought and reflection; extracting, by its peculiar powers, from inanimate and senseless things, the observations of the naturalist, the deductions of the philosopher, and the enchantments of the poet.

The simplest faculties of the human mind, and those which are earliest in operation, I mean the faculties of external perception, may well awaken our admiration of the divine power to which we owe them. The bodily organs, by means of which they are exercised, are so exquisite in their structure, that they form one of the most interesting subjects of human investigation: but there is something far more wonderful behind; the power which, by means of these instruments,

perceives the sensible qualities of external things. There is no necessary connexion between my opening my eyes and receiving intimations of the various objects around me ; and yet I no sooner draw up the little curtain of my eyelid, than I behold, at a glance, the wonders of nature, the works of art, the persons of my fellow-men, and perhaps, depicted in their countenances, the inmost feelings of their hearts. These powers of perception are the gift of the Almighty ; and they reside, not in the eye, which is only a telescope of divine construction, but in the mind. If, indeed, the telescope be injured, the exercise of vision is obstructed ; but, however perfect the instrument, its use is obviously limited to the transmission and refraction of the rays of light, and it were absurd to attribute to its lenses and its retina, the phenomena of perception and discernment, which imply principles of an entirely different and infinitely nobler kind.

The higher faculties and nobler operations of the human mind, I must not attempt to enumerate, far less to analyse ; but contemplate for a moment some of their vast results. Behold that feeble creature man, by his superior intelligence, subduing animals of strength and activity far surpassing his own, and employing their powers in his service ; see him controlling the vegetative powers of the earth, directing its fertility, and changing the barren wilderness and impenetrable forest into a fruitful field ; see him overleaping the boundaries of country, and guiding his bark through the trackless waves of boundless unfathomable ocean ; see him, not satisfied with the ample disclosures of nature, subjecting her to experiment, and forcing her to reveal her secrets ;

see him collecting, from a survey of the history of man, the accumulated wisdom of past ages, and applying it to the improvement and comfort of the ages to come ; see him, not confining his researches to the plants he treads on, and the animals around him, but following the stars in their courses, ascertaining their motions and revolutions, and demonstrating, at once, the immensity of the works of God, and the simplicity of the laws by which they are regulated. Behold him in a different aspect, united to his species by a thousand ties ; in the family, seeking solace and repose in scenes of domestic affection ; in the state, forgetting himself in zeal for the many, and studying only the interests of mankind. Finally, contemplate him distinguished as the subject of the moral government of God ; with thoughts, desires, and affections that address themselves to objects beyond the sphere of created being and mortal existence ; endowed with conscience, the delegate of the Most High ; accosted by prophets and apostles, the oft-returning messengers of heaven ; and, O last effort of all-conquering mercy ! visited and reclaimed by God himself, wearing the veil of sin-degraded humanity. Ah ! could we but learn to estimate our souls by the price God has put upon them, we should not so basely vilify their powers, so boldly misapply their godlike attributes.

The mind of man is doubtless the noblest work of God which he has subjected to our inspection. How divinely is it constituted ; how richly endowed with faculties ; how nice in its adaptation to the material frame, formed for its use ; how well fitted for its rank in the order of creation ; how exquisitely gifted with powers for

holding communication with other intelligent beings, probably far beyond any thing of which this state gives us experience! Capable of what happiness, the fond insatiable aspirations of nature give us to conjecture; susceptible of such woe as only a spirit of immortal origin may experience, fallen, and in a fallen world.

THE SUBLIME CONTEMPLATIONS OF A HOLY SOUL.

BUT that lofty soul that bears about with it the living apprehension of its being made for an everlasting state, so earnestly intends it, that it shall ever be a descent and vouchsafement with it, if it allow itself to take notice what busy mortals are doing in their (as they reckon them) grand negotiations here below. And if there be a suspicion of an aptness, or inclination to intermeddle in them to their prejudice, to whom that part belongs, can heartily say to it, (as the philosopher to the jealous tyrant,) We of this academy are not at leisure to mind so mean things: we have somewhat else to do than to talk of you. He hath still the image before his eye, of this world vanishing and passing away: of the other, with the everlasting affairs and concerns of it, even now ready to take place, and fill up all the stage; and can represent to himself the vision not from a melancholic fancy, or crazed brain, but a rational faith, and a sober well-instructed mind, of the world, dissolving monarchies and kingdoms breaking up, thrones tumbling, crowns and sceptres lying as neglected things. He hath a telescope, through which he can behold the glo-

rious appearances of the Supreme Judge ; the solemn state of his majestic person ; the splendid pomp of his magnificent and vastly numerous retinue ; the obsequious throng of glorious celestial creatures, doing homage to their eternal King ; the swift flight of his royal guards, sent forth into the four winds to gather the elect, and covering the face of the heavens with their spreading wings ; the universal silent attention of all to that loud sounding trumpet that shakes the pillars of the world, pierces the inward caverns of the earth, and resounds from every part of the encircling heavens ; the many myriads of joyful expectants arising, changing, putting on glory, taking wings and contending upwards, to join themselves to the triumphant heavenly host ; the judgment seat ; the books opened ; the frightful amazed looks of surprised wretches ; the equal administration of the final judgment ; the adjudication of all to their eternal states ; the heavens rolled up as a scroll ; the earth and all things therein consumed and burnt up.

CONSCIENCE.

THAT men do things against their conscience, is no otherwise than as they do things against their reason ; but a man may as well cease to be a man, as to be wholly without conscience. For the drunkard will be sober, and his conscience will be awake next morning : this is a perpetual pulse, and, though it may be interrupted, yet if the man be alive, it will beat before he dies ; and so long as we believe a God, so long our conscience will at least teach us, if it does not also

smite us. But as God sometimes lets a man go on in sin, and does not punish him, so does conscience; but in this case, unless the man be smitten and awakened before he dies, both God and the conscience reserve their wrath to be inflicted in hell. It is one and the same thing, God's wrath, and an evil guilty conscience; for by the same hand by which God gives his law, by the same he punishes them that transgress the law. God gave the old law by the ministry of angels, and when the people broke it, he sent evil angels among them. Now God gives us a law in our consciences, and there he hath established the penalty. This is the worm that never dies; let it be trod upon ever so much here, it will turn again. It cannot die here, and it shall be alive for ever.

A GOOD CONSCIENCE THE GREATEST COMFORT.

No bed so soft, no flowers so sweet, so florid, and delicious, as a good conscience, in which springs all that is delectable, all that may sustain and recreate our spirits. I am pleased in nothing so much as in the remembrances and conscience of my duty, said Cicero. Upon this pillow, and on this bed, Christ slept soundly in a storm; and Peter in prison so fast, that the brightness of an angel could not awake him, or make him rise up without a blow on his side. This refreshed the sorrows of Hezekiah when he was smitten with the plague, and not only brought pleasure for what was past, and so doubled the good of it, but it also added something to the number of his years.

And this made Paul and Silas sing in prison, and in an earthquake ; and that I may sum up all the good things in this world, I borrow the expression of St. Bernard,—It is here a perpetual comfort, it will be hereafter an eternal crown.

THE NECESSITY OF A MEDIATOR.

THE God of the Christians is a God who makes the soul perceive that he is its only good ; that its only rest is in him ; that it can have no joy but in his love ; and at the same time causes it to abhor those obstacles which hinder and withhold it from loving him with all its strength. Self-love and concupiscence which do this are insupportable to it. God makes it feel that there is this self-love deeply rooted within it, and that He alone can remove it. This it is to know God as a Christian. But, to know him in this manner, we must at the same time know our own misery and unworthiness, and the need we have of a Mediator, in order to draw nigh to God, and unite ourselves to him. We must never separate these truths, because either by itself is not only unprofitable but hurtful. The knowledge of God, without the knowledge of our own misery, produces pride. The knowledge of our own misery, without the knowledge of Jesus Christ, produces despair. But the knowledge of Jesus Christ exempts us both from pride and despair ; because in him we see God, our own misery, and the only way of recovery from it.

We may know God without knowing our own miseries, or our own miseries without knowing God ; or we may know both, without knowing

the means of deliverance from the miseries which oppress us. But we cannot know Jesus Christ, without at the same time knowing God, our own miseries, and the remedy for them; because Jesus Christ is not only God, but he is God the healer of our miseries.

COVENANT OF GRACE.

If any thing ought to be accounted worthy of the most attentive consideration, it is indeed the covenant of grace. Here a way is shown unto a better paradise than the earthly, and to a more certain and a more stable happiness than that from which Adam fell. Here new hopes shine upon ruined mortals, which by so much ought the more to be acceptable, by how much it came more unexpected. Here conditions are offered, to which eternal life is annexed; conditions not again by us to be performed, which would cause the mind to despond; but by Him who departed not this life before he had truly said, "It is finished."

THE GOSPEL.

The word *gospel* signifies good tidings; and the message which the gospel contains is indeed fraught with the most cheering intelligence. It does not merely communicate news from a distant country, and concerning a people with whom we are little connected. It contains tidings of great joy, which respect ourselves. It does not rehearse the civil and political state of the dif-

ferent nations of the earth, or inform us of new and better modes of conducting trade and government. It does not tell us of mountains unopened, where mines of treasure are to be found; or of regions unexplored, from which new luxuries may be imported. Its contents are infinitely more joyful and excellent. It describes to us the policy and the government of Emanuel's realm; and unfolds the treasures and delights which are the heritage of its subjects. It discovers to us at once the cause and the remedy of all our evils. It reveals whence and how we may obtain peace of mind on earth, and immortal felicity in heaven. If our share of worldly goods be little, it informs us how to make that little a treasure to ourselves; if much, how to render our superabundance a blessing to others. It unfolds the grand secret, how to be happy in every situation, to rejoice in afflictions, to smile beneath the gray hairs of age and to descend, with firm step and undaunted heart, to the chambers of death.

The Gospel is an object of importance to mankind. Unto men perishing in sin and misery, the grace of God, or the doctrine of God our Saviour, is most interesting. Salvation to them is the one thing most needful; and the grace of God which brings the report of it to their ears, displays the glory of it before their eyes, and sets the blessings of it within reach of their hands, must be to them unspeakable and universally interesting. You who have believed the report, and beheld the glory, and received the blessings, are happy beyond expression; and bound, by every consideration, to esteem, and improve, and commend the glorious gospel, by which your

riches, and honours, and titles are ascertained, and in believing which your possession and inheritance are sealed and secured. The glory of God, and compassion to the perishing, will produce in your exercise a generous concern for dark places of the earth, which are without the gospel of the grace of God, and fervent prayers and endeavours that the dispensations of it may be extended, and sinners of all nations enlightened, enriched, and saved.

Neither the worth nor the efficacy of the Gospel is derived from man. In respect of worth, it cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, nor the topaz of Ethiopia; onyxes and sapphires need not be mentioned. The price of the grace of God is above pearls and rubies. Its worth is inestimable, and the inherent quality of the doctrine itself. The efficacy is not of man, any more than the worth. It is not by might, nor by power, the wisdom of words, nor the excellence of speech; but by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and working mightily with the word, that the fortresses of error are shaken, the walls of Jericho thrown down, and the standard of the gospel, with this motto, *The Grace of God*, lifted up in kingdoms and in hearts. Who was Paul, and who was Apollos, but ministers, by whom God wrought, and men believed? The first planted by his learning, and the last watered with his eloquence, but God gave the increase.

The lustre of the new dispensation of the grace of God is brighter than the old. Under the old dispensation, there were light and glory. Light shined, but it shined in darkness. Glory appeared, but it appeared in a cloud, and through

a veil. The beams of the Sun of Righteousness passed through a thick and gross atmosphere of ceremony, and were obscured by clouds of incense and pillars of smoke. In the new dispensation, this glorious Luminary appears in his meridian, and the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shines in his face with sevenfold lustre. The light of the moon is as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun is sevenfold, as the light of seven days. Arise, shine, O Christendom ; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. Darkness covers other parts, and gross darkness other people ; but the Lord is risen upon us, and his glory is seen upon us. If the gospel of the grace of God be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. May God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shine in our hearts, and give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.

The most celebrated systems of philosophers could not have benefited the world like the religion of Christ. With more appearance of ingenuity than the superstitions of the vulgar, they fall equally short of the object at which they aim. The lamp of reason which burns in the human breast, though trimmed with ever so much care, gives only a feeble and wavering light ; and the greatest geniuses, who have sat down to read the divine nature with no better assistance, have risen from the task with little improvement, unable to read distinctly the very

first letters of **JEHOVAH'S** name, or to discover the service with which he will be pleased, and the satisfaction he will accept for past transgressions. Can the light of the stars, especially when the sky is obscured, serve man for the purposes of life? And how shall reason, obscured, as it confessedly is, by ignorance, and prejudice, and vice, light the sinner to God and happiness? The deductions of reason can at best produce in the breast only a tremulous hope, founded on probability. They must often, like those wandering lights which appear to the benighted traveller in marshy places, mislead while they seem to direct. Christianity alone can conduct to true felicity. Its whole horizon is illuminated by the great "Light of the world"—by "the Sun of Righteousness," whose beams irradiate, whose presence enlivens, whose influence gives life, vigour, activity, joy, to those on whom he shines. A single ray from Christ, the great Fountain of spiritual light, is of more use to lead a sinner to God, than all the torches lighted up by the reason or fancy of all the sages of ancient and modern times.

THE BIBLE.

I MUST recommend to all, the incessant study of **ONE BOOK**, which infinitely more than all others, tends at once to enlarge the understanding, to sublimiate the sentiments, to purify the soul, and thus prepare it for the everlasting presence and communion of its God. The Bible may be undervalued by the prosperous and the gay; but to the afflicted, it is the balm of every woe. It

may be neglected in health ; but it is the only friend to the dying pillow. It may be despised by the vain and hated by the impious ; but with all the wise, and great, and excellent of the race, it has been an object of unmingled adoration and love. "Every sentence of the Bible," says Bishop Horsley, "is from God ; and every man is interested in the meaning of it." "We account," says Sir Isaac Newton, "the Scriptures of God the most sublime philosophy." "Those passages," says Boyle, "which are so obscure, that they teach us nothing else, may at least teach us humility." "In the first page of this sacred book," says Horne, "a child may learn more in an hour, than all the philosophers in the world learned without it in a thousand years." "Study," says Locke, "the holy Scriptures. Therein are contained the words of eternal life. It has God for its author ; salvation for its end ; and truth without any mixture of error, for its matter." "This book," says Mrs. Huntingdon, "has done more for me than all the men on earth, and all the angels in heaven could have done." "By the Scriptures," says Jay, "we can associate with Paul and Isaiah ; with Moses and the patriarchs ; and can sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of God."

Dr. Samuel Johnson, was distinguished as a moral writer ; his compositions have seldom been excelled in energy of thought and beauty of expression. To a young gentleman who visited him on his death-bed, he said, "Young man, attend to the voice of one who has possessed a certain degree of fame in the world, and who will shortly appear before his Maker ; read the Bible every day of your life."

PECULIAR OPERATION OF CHRISTIANITY.

How vague in general is our notion of this the most remarkable change which has ever been wrought in the state of mankind ! The violent and rapid conquests of Mohammedanism are clear and intelligible ; a conquering nation overruns a great part of the world, and establishes its faith upon the ruins which its arms have made. The triumph of Christianity is the secret progress of opinion, working *at first* no change in the existing forms or relations of society, but gradually detaching individuals, cities, nations, from their ancestral faith ; still growing in numerical superiority, compressing the inert resistance of its antagonist into a narrower compass ; not sweeping clear and levelling the ground for the erection of its new system, but springing up, as it were, like a fresh growth of vigorous trees above a decaying forest, which gradually withers down into a thin and perishing underwood, till at length it entirely dies away—or only hangs a few parasitical branches upon the stately grove which has succeeded to its place and honours.

JESUS THE MEDIATOR.

THE character of a Mediator is in strict analogy with the order of nature and Providence, and in perfect congruity with our views of the holiness of God, and our needs as feeble and sinful creatures. It is strange that any can be so thoughtless as to depreciate the value of this office, and affect to imagine that the mercy of God would be more gloriously displayed if otherwise

dispensed. We need but examine the course of nature to convince us of the fallacy of such an opinion. When any great calamity is impending over a city or nation, how often is it in the power of one or more persons to step forward and avert the blow! When an individual is on the eve of ruin, how common for a friend to interpose and prevent the danger! To look merely at the age of infancy, what instances have we in the kind offices of parents, guardians, and instructors, of continual mediation and benefaction. In these cases, surely God is the fountain of mercy: it is God that preserves the nation,—it is God that relieves the individual,—it is God that watches over the infant and rears it to maturity. But all this beneficence of the Deity is dispensed through the mediation of others. Indeed this is a mode of action characteristic of the Deity. We cannot see where the direct communication of his benevolence begins. Wherever we see the tide of mercy,—whether in the moral or the natural world,—we behold it flowing through a mediator. The arrangement is most wise, most gracious. It gives consistency and mutual dependence of parts in the natural creation; and it cements the moral creation in a union, the bonds of which are formed of love and gratitude, and all the amiable affections of the soul.

PERFECTIONS OF CHRIST'S CHARACTER.

NEVER was a character at the same time so commanding and natural, so resplendent and pleasing, so amiable and venerable, as that of Christ. There is a peculiar contrast in it be-

tween an awful dignity and majesty, and the most engaging loveliness, tenderness, and softness. He now converses with prophets, lawgivers, and angels; and the next instant he meekly endures the dullness of his disciples, and the blasphemies and rage of the multitude. He now calls himself greater than Solomon; one who can command legions of angels; the giver of life to whomsoever he will; the Son of God who shall sit on his glorious throne to judge the world. At other times, we see him embracing young children; not lifting up his voice in the streets; not breaking the bruised reed, nor quenching the smoking flax; calling his disciples not servants, but friends and brethren; and comforting them with an exuberant and parental affection. Let us pause an instant, and fill our minds with the idea of one, who knew all things heavenly and earthly; searched and laid open the inmost recesses of the heart; rectified every prejudice, and removed every mistake of a moral and religious kind; by a word exercised power over all nature; penetrated the hidden events of futurity; gave promises of admission into a happy immortality; had the keys of life and death; claimed an union with the Father,—and yet was pious, mild, gentle, humble, affable, social, benevolent, friendly, affectionate. Such a character is fairer than the morning-star. Each separate virtue is made stronger by opposition and contrast; and the union of so many virtues forms a brightness, which fitly represents the glory of that God who is invisible, who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen or can see.

CHRIST AND MAHOMET COMPARED.

Go to your natural religion, lay before her Mahomet and his disciples arrayed in armour and in blood, riding in triumph over the spoils of thousands and ten thousands, who fell by his victorious sword. Show her the cities which he set in flames, the countries which he ravaged and destroyed, and the miserable distress of all the inhabitants of the earth. When she has viewed him in this scene, carry her into his retirements : show her the prophet's chamber, his concubines and wives, and let her see his adulteries, and hear him allege revelation and his divine commission, to justify his lusts and his oppressions. When she is tired with this prospect, then show her the blessed Jesus, humble and meek, doing good to all the sons of men, patiently instructing the ignorant and the perverse. Let her see him in his most retired privacies ; let her follow him to the Mount, and hear his devotions and supplications to God. Carry her to the table, to view his poor fare, and hear his heavenly discourse. Let her see him injured, but not provoked ! Let her attend him to the tribunal, and consider the patience with which he endured the scoffs and reproaches of his enemies. Lead her to his cross, and let her view him in the agonies of death, and hear his last prayer for his persecutors, " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." When natural religion has viewed both, ask which is the prophet of God ?—But her answer we have already had, when she saw part of this scene through the eyes of the centurion, who attended him at the cross ; by him she said, " Truly this is the Son of God."

COMPASSION OF CHRIST.

How multiform are the miseries of human life ! Yonder stands one, waiting for a hand to guide him. The eye is extinguished ; and while day smiles on the face of nature, night gathers for ever round his head. There is another, whose ear never drank in a stream of melody—the organ is closed against strains which steal through that avenue into the heart of his neighbour—“ he never heard the sweet music of speech,” nor perceived the tones of his own unformed, untuned, unmodulated voice. Here is a third, who appears before me, without the power of utterance—the string of the tongue was never loosed, and he never spake—the organs of speech are deranged, or were never perfectly formed—he hears tones which vibrate on his heart ;—but he cannot impart through the same medium the same pleasurable sensation. These could not escape the compassionate eye of Jesus. He gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, limbs to the maimed, health to the sick, strength to decrepitude.—But yonder is the chamber of death. Darker is the cloud that broods there. Where the tongue was silent, the eye was eloquent—when the palsied limb refused to move, the ear heard, and discriminated sounds which melt the passions, and stir the spirit within us : it was sad to tend the couch of sickness—but still we seemed to have some hold upon the sufferer, and he to have some interest in life. But that is the bed of mortality, and the young, the beautiful, the only hope of her family is stretched there—and there is Jesus also, rousing her from death as from a gentle slumber, and restoring her

to the arms of her parents. There is yet another class of suffering worse than death. It glares in the eye, it raves in the voice, struggles in the limbs of that man, whose throne of reason imagination has usurped, and over the whole empire of his mind madness reigns in all its accumulated horrors. Visions—horrible visions of unreal and inconceivable objects float before his disordered senses,—while he hears not, he distinguishes not, he regards not the voice of parent, or of wife, or of child, or of friend. The spirit sits surrounded by the ruins of nature, terrified amidst shattered, and useless, or perverted organs; and covered with the midnight of despair. Oh, let the compassionate eye of the Saviour fix upon this object!—and it does—he meets him coming from among the tombs—he speaks the word—he calms the tempest—behold “the man sitting at his feet, clothed, and in his right mind.” He gave “reason and understanding to the distracted, and release from the power of Satan, to those who were possessed by him.”

THE UNSPEAKABLE GIFT.

WHEN God gave us his Son, he gave us an infinitely greater gift than the world, the Creator is infinitely more glorious than the creature, and the Son of God is the Creator of all things. God can make innumerable worlds by the word of his mouth; he has but one only Son, and he spared not his only Son, but gave him to the death of the cross for us all.

God's love to his people is from everlasting to everlasting; but from everlasting to everlasting

there is no manifestation of it known, or conceivable by us, that can be compared to this. The light of the sun is always the same, but it shines brightest to us at noon; the cross of Christ was the noon-tide of everlasting love; the meridian splendour of eternal mercy; there were many bright manifestations of the same love before; but they were like the light of the morning, that shines more and more unto the perfect day; and that perfect day was when Christ was on the cross, when darkness covered the land.

RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST.

THE righteousness wherein we must be found, if we will be justified, is not our own, therefore we cannot be justified by any inherent quality. Christ hath merited righteousness for as many as are found in him. In him God findeth us, if we be faithful; for by faith we are incorporated into Christ. Then, although in ourselves we be altogether sinful and unrighteous, yet even the man who is impious in himself, full of iniquity, full of sin—him, being found in Christ through faith, and having his sin remitted through repentance—him God beholdeth with a gracious eye, putteth away his sin by not imputing it; taketh quite away the punishment due thereunto by pardoning it; and accepteth him in Jesus Christ as perfectly righteous, as if he had fulfilled all that was commanded him in the law. Shall I say, more perfectly righteous than if himself had fulfilled the whole law? I must take heed what I say; but the apostle saith, "God hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made

the righteousness of God in him." Such we are in the sight of God the Father, as is the very Son of God himself. Let it be counted folly, or phrensy, or fancy, whatsoever, it is our comfort and our wisdom; we care for no knowledge in the world but this, that man hath sinned, and God hath suffered—that God hath made himself the Son of man, and that men are made the righteousness of God.

RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST ALL-SUFFICIENT.

If I had the righteousness of a saint, says one, O how happy should I be! If I had the righteousness of an angel, says another, I should fear no evil. But I am bold to say, that the poorest sinner who believes in Christ, has a righteousness infinitely more excellent than that of either saints or angels. If the law asks for sinless perfection, it is to be found in Christ my divine surety. If the law requires obedience that may stand before the burning eye of God, behold it is in Jesus my Mediator. Should the strictest justice arraign me, and the purest holiness make its demands upon me, I remit them both to my dying and obedient Emanuel. With him the Father is always well pleased, and in him the believer stands complete.

CHRIST A PRESENT FRIEND.

WHILE we wander through the wilderness of this world amid so many wants, how desirable must it be to find a friend, able and willing to furnish the needed supplies! Amid so many ene-

mies and dangers, how desirable must it be to find a friend able and willing to furnish the necessary protection ! Amid so many temptations, to watch over us ! Amid so many sorrows, to relieve us ; in solitude to be our companion, in difficulties our helper, in despondence our support, in disease our physician, in death our hope, resurrection, and life ! In a word, how desirable must it be to find a friend, who, throughout all the strange, discouraging state of the present life, will give us peace, consolation, and joy ; and cause all things, even the most untoward and perplexing, to "work together for our good !"

On a dying-bed, especially when "our flesh" and "our hearts" must "fail," of course, our earthly friends yield us little consolation, and no hope, and the world itself retires from our view, how delightful will such a friend be ! Then the soul, uncertain, alone, hovering over the form which it has so long inhabited, and stretching its wings for its flight into the unknown vast, will sigh and pant for an arm on which it may lean, and a bosom on which it may safely recline. But there, Christ is present with all his tenderness, and all his power. With one hand he holds the anchor of hope, and with the other he points the way to heaven.

CHRIST AN ALL-POWERFUL FRIEND.

CHRIST is an all-powerful friend. The ability of a friend to serve us, might fall short of his inclination. However cordially attached to our interests, he might be unable to promote them. But the power of Christ is infinite, as his love is

immeasurable. "All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth." The kingdoms of nature, of providence, of grace, are under his control. He is "the mighty God," the Creator and Upholder of all things. With what confidence may not the people of Christ repose on such an all-powerful Friend? Into what difficulties can they be plunged, from which he cannot extricate them? With what enemies can they be called to contend, from which he cannot protect them? Are they afflicted with sickness? He can say to the pestilence, Go, and it goeth. Are they oppressed with want? He can send his ravens and feed them. Are they immured in prisons? He can commission his angels to deliver them. Are they in perils of water? The winds and the waves obey his voice. Are they exposed to ravenous beasts? He can stop the mouths of lions. Are they cast into the burning furnace? He can quench the violence of fire. In spiritual concerns, is he less mighty to save? Hear his own declaration: "I will give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." Hear the declaration of his apostle, St. Paul: "I know whom I have believed; and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." What comfortable declarations to the people of Christ! Satan may desire to have them that he may sift them as wheat; but stronger is He who is with them, than he who is against them. In themselves they are weak and ready to fall; but "underneath are the everlasting arms." He who "loved them and gave himself for them, is able to save them to the uttermost." He "will keep them by his power through faith unto salvation."

CHRIST A SEASONABLE FRIEND.

BEHOLD that emaciated form, agonized with pain, sinking under the weight of accumulated disease. By to-morrow's dawn he will be a lifeless corpse. What, in this trying season, is the support which he receives? He has trusted in riches; do riches now sustain him? Do they illumine his cheerless prospect? Do they allay his guilty fears? He has placed his confidence in man—does man now minister to his relief? Where are the gay companions of his mirthful hours? Where is the servile herd of sycophants, who once hung upon his lips? Where are the admiring crowds who sounded forth his praises, and idolized his name? All, all are fled. In such a trying season, does Christ forsake his people? Does he leave them comfortless and unsupported? Visit the chamber of the dying Christian. Mark his placid brow—his eye glistening with hope—his countenance, from which even the advancing hand of death cannot displace the smile. Whence springs this sweet serenity, this calm, triumphant cheerfulness? Christ is with him—Christ has smoothed the bed of death, and quiets every fear. “Does death alarm? I have removed its sting. Does the thought of separation from earthly friends distress? ‘Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them; and let thy widows trust in me.’ Does the apprehension of dissolution terrify? ‘When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee;—be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.’”

THE LIFE OF CHRIST THE SUPPORT OF THE CHURCH.

THE existence of the Church in this depraved world is one of the wonders of Providence. It is a vessel living in a tempestuous sea ; a bush on fire, but not consumed. If we reflect on the enmity of the wicked against the righteous, their great superiority over them—the attempts that have been made to exterminate them—the frequent diminution of their numbers by defection and death—their existence, and especially their increase, must be wonderful, and can no otherwise be accounted for, but that Christ liveth.

When they were “few in number, and wandered as strangers from one nation to another, he suffered no man to hurt them ; he reprov'd kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.” In Egypt he saw their affliction, and came down to deliver them. Of Jerusalem the enemy said, “Rase, rase it to the foundation ;” but the Lord remembered it, and destroyed its destroyer. Under the Persian dominion, the captives were restored to their own land ; yet even then the enemy intrigued against them, so that for one and twenty years the building of the temple was hindered, and the prayers of the prophet Daniel were unanswered. Thus it was, I conceive, that “the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood the angel for *one and twenty days* ; but, lo, Michael, the chief prince, stood with him, and helped him.”

Under the gospel dispensation, as the church became more spiritual, the hatred increased ; and as religion was from hence more of a personal than a national concern, such was the opposition

directed against it. But still the Great Head of the church lived. The persecution which raged at the time of this prophecy, was the second of ten cruel persecutions from the heathen emperors; and though, after this the government became professedly Christian, yet such were the corruptions which entered in at this door, that in a little time that which was called the Christian church, became an antichristian harlot, persecuting the servants of Jesus with a cruelty equal, if not superior to that of heathens. These floods filled the breadth of Emanuel's land, reaching even to the neck; but the Church's Head being above water, she has survived them all.

Often have we seen in our smaller circles the cause of God reduced to a low condition; sometimes by the falling away of characters who seemed to be pillars, and sometimes by the removal of great and good men by death. But under all this it is our comfort, the Lord liveth—The government is on his shoulder.

THE SURE FOUNDATION.

SOME are all their days laying the foundation, and are never able to build upon it to any comfort to themselves, or usefulness to others; and the reason is, because they will be mixing with the foundation, stones that are only fit for the following building. They will be bringing their obedience, duties, mortification of sin, and the like, unto the foundation. These are precious stones to build with; but unmeet to be first laid, to bear upon them the whole weight of the building. The foundation is to be laid in mere grace,

mercy, pardon in the blood of Christ. This the soul is to accept of, and to rest in, merely as it is grace, without the consideration of any thing in itself, but that it is sinful and obnoxious to ruin. This it finds a difficulty in, and would gladly have something of its own to mix with it. It cannot tell how to fix these foundation stones without some cement of its own endeavours and duty; and because these things will not mix, they spend a fruitless labour about it all their days. But if the foundation be of grace, it is not at all of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. If any thing of our own be mixed with grace in this matter, it utterly destroys the nature of grace, which, if it be not alone, is not at all.

CHRIST THE SINNER'S REFUGE.

WHEN the Spirit of truth makes inquisition for sin, guilt is then felt, because man beholds himself a child of wrath by nature, and a condemned criminal by means of his practice. In this salutary, but unhappy stage of things, he often looks behind, and every glance discovers blacker darkness, and nearer approaching storms. He looks forward, and sees nothing but apparent rocks of judgment, waves of wrath, without one inlet or shelter for his trembling soul. This is a time of trouble and dismay, an hour when succouring mercy is the all in all. Oh! what an unspeakable happiness is it, at such a time as this, to find that haven where the trembling spirit would be—to find Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners, as our Saviour, our “hiding place from the storm, and covert from the tempest.” Him having found,

the thunders of the broken law may echo forth all their condemnation. Him having found, the sword of vengeance and of justice, like the fluid stream, may blaze on every side, yet the soul can rest secure; and, blest with a sense of his pardoning love, it can smile away every pursuing storm, and pass in sweet tranquillity the waves of death, and the rocks of judgment. Nay, more, they will guide his happy pardoned spirit into that haven of rest which it so anxiously sought for its final refuge.

MISERABLE FATE OF THOSE WHO DESPISE CHRIST.

YE that have, to this moment, despised the Saviour by neglecting his salvation, Oh that God would open your eyes to the horrors of your situation, before these horrors are unutterably augmented, and must be inevitably and eternally endured! You stand as upon a shelf, undermined by every wave borne in upon it by the tide of time; and if the last shock be given, before you are "reconciled to God through the death of his Son," you will be engulfed in ruin. The worm that never dies must then commence its gnawings, and the flame that is inextinguishable, its inconceivable torments. All this you may perhaps laugh to scorn as the frantic raving of a fanatical enthusiasm, or at least as the commonplace terrors of professional cant; but may God give you repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth, lest you experience all to be dreadful realities! Now you are careless and unconcerned: the terrors of the Lord you despise the message

of his mercy you turn away from you ; too well do you answer the description of the wise man—as “fools,” you “mock at sin ;” but the shaft may be on the wing that numbers you with the dead—the storm that brings destruction in its blast, waits but for its commission to hurl you to the depths of hell. I pursue you, in thought, through a life of alienation from God,—spent in pursuit of that visionary pleasure, which, like the apples of Sodom, crumbles at your attempt to seize it—in amassing the glittering dust, that only augments the cares it was imagined it would dispel—in hunting after fame, that dies with the breath that raised it ; or honours, that, like empty bubbles, when you think to grasp them, burst away for ever from the view. At every step, I read upon the monuments your folly has raised, the inscription “All is vanity and vexation of spirit.” I see you on the bed of death ; your eyes, that once sparkled with vivacity, are languid and lifeless ; the rose of health and youth has faded away to the wanness of despair. There—the last effort is made—nature has groaned its last—shall I go on ? My soul shudders at the prospect. The immortal spirit has received its doom. Nor angels nor God can reverse it. On the walls of that prison, which must eternally inclose it, these words are written as in characters of flame, “Reserved under chains of darkness—suffering the vengeance of eternal fire ; because they obeyed not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.” But now is the accepted time, the day of salvation. Sinners, it is Jesus who delivers from the wrath to come. For this he poured out his soul unto death. Flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before you.

GUILT AND PUNISHMENT OF INFIDELITY.

CHRISTIANITY, which unbelievers reject, is a message from God; and, considered simply as a message from God, how much disrespect to the divine authority—what a daring contempt of the divine Majesty does it imply! And, independently of the nature or purpose of the message, what an awful condemnation will the mere refusal of it bring upon their guilty heads! But deeper is their guilt, and more awful their condemnation, when we recollect what that message is, which they spurn away from them. It is a message of grace: it conveys to them the offer of pardon, reconciliation, and eternal life: it makes a complete provision for their deliverance from hell, and for their final exaltation to heaven. In refusing the gospel, therefore, they refuse to be saved. They deliberately prefer a continuance in that state of alienation from God, and of liability to everlasting destruction, in which disobedience has already placed them. And continuing in that state, they must inevitably perish. And all that they shall suffer as sinners, must be aggravated tenfold by the reflection, that they suffer because they despised the redemption that was provided for them—because they shut their eyes against the light of heaven, and their ears against the voice of heaven, and their hearts against the mercy of heaven—because they persevered in infidelity, in despite of all the tenderness with which God entreated them, and in defiance of all the authority with which he commanded them, to believe in one who was “mighty and able to save them to the very uttermost.”

DUTY OF INSTRUCTING THE HEATHEN.

I DID not expect to hear that it could be a question, whether any nation, uninstructed in religion, should receive instruction ; or, whether that instruction should be imparted to them by a translation of the Holy Books into their own language. If obedience to the will of God be necessary to happiness, and knowledge of his will be necessary to obedience, I know not how he that withholds this knowledge, or delays it, can be said to love his neighbour as himself.. He that voluntarily continues in ignorance, is guilty of all the crimes which ignorance produces, as to him that extinguishes the tapers of a light-house might justly be imputed the calamities of shipwrecks. Christianity is the highest perfection of humanity ; and as no man is good, but as he wishes the good of others, so no man can be good in the highest degree, who wishes not to others the largest measures of the greatest good. To omit for a year, or for a day, the most efficacious method of advancing Christianity, in compliance with any purposes that terminate on this side of the grave, is a crime of which the world has seldom had an example.

FAITH THE TRUE MEDIUM OF VISION..

IT is by faith that we contemplate unseen things. To the eye of a clown, a planet appears but a twinkling star ; but if he looked through a telescope, and were able to calculate, he would perceive that it was a great world, and would be astonished at its distance and magnitude. While

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work together for good, his heart will be content and cheerful; he shall be freed from all anxieties which otherwise would distract his soul. The more distinct and evident the actings of his faith are, the more will they bring into his conscience, and the more into his heart. When his actings of faith are so lively and express, that he becomes fully conscious of them, he thereby sits down to a rich feast of inward tranquillity, and spiritual delight. When his faith, under the influences of the Holy Spirit, is so direct and clear in its exercise, as to meet Christ in the heart, heart to heart, and eye to eye, it is like a rod of myrtle in the hand of the traveller, which some say, revives his spirits, and enables him to proceed without feeling himself weary. He thereby dwells in Him, who is the fountain of Israel, the fountain from which streams of ineffable delight do flow. Let the believer, then, study to be more distinct, clear, and express in his exercise of faith.

When support when nature shrinks; faith
in God, Father, even when he frowns; and
the discovery of a sun through the dark-
ness.

HOW FAITH JUSTIFIES.

It remains that we inquire how faith justifies. Certainly not in that sense, as though God graciously accepts the act of faith, and new obedience proceeding from faith, in return of that perfect obedience, which, ac-

cording to the strictness of the law, we ought to have; for this were to make void the whole gospel. In the room of perfect obedience, which the law requires to justification, the gospel hath not substituted our faith, but the obedience of Christ, by which the righteousness of the law is fulfilled: and it is false that faith and our obedience are one and the same thing. I confess, faith is a virtue commanded by the law, and that the believer, so far as he believes, does obey God. I confess again, no faith is to be accounted true and living, which is not productive of good works. But yet faith is one thing, and obedience flowing from faith quite another thing, especially in the business of justification, of which we treat; for Paul always contra-distinguisheth all manner of works from faith. Lastly, neither the truth nor righteousness of God suffers, that our faith and obedience, which are imperfect, should be admitted as perfect; for it is the will of God, that the righteousness of the law should be fulfilled in our justification, not that any thing should derogate from it.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH NO RELEASE FROM PERSONAL OBEDIENCE.

WHAT superficial views of the gospel must they entertain, who can once suppose that the obedience of Christ, in the room and stead of sinners, was ever meant to grant them a release from personal obedience! How strange a conclusion! How absurd to think, that the great God would have employed such a wonderful method to assert the dignity and authority of his

law, only that his creatures might have the liberty of transgressing it ! It is impossible that such impious thoughts can seriously enter into the mind of that man, who properly understands, and firmly believes the gospel of Christ. The more confidently he relies on the righteousness of God his Saviour, the more deeply must his mind be impressed with a sense of the authority and obligation of the law. It was a conviction of the purity of this law, that first taught him the necessity of a better righteousness than his own ; and still, by the same means, he is kept " looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus unto eternal life." He expects no favour from God on account of any merit of his own, not because obedience is less pleasing to him than to others, but because the commandments of his God appear to him exceeding broad. He rejoices in the finished work of the divine Redeemer, not because it weakens the obligations to duty, but because, in this glorious scheme of mercy, he perceives the character of God, and the authority of his law most fully vindicated. He can truly say with the apostle, " I delight in the law of God after the inward man," and with the Psalmist, " O how love I thy law ! it is my meditation all the day. How sweet are thy words unto my taste ! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth. Through thy precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way."

As the belief of a God is the foundation of all religion, there can be no religion without faith ; but as true religion includes virtue, religion cannot be perfect without works.

IMPORTANT QUESTION.

Is religion, this pearl of great price, in my possession? Important question! If so, give God the glory due unto his name, for flesh and blood, ordinances and ministers, have not imparted this blessing unto us, but your Father who is in heaven. But if, alas! our conscience testifies that we are utter strangers to religion, which is emphatically described as "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," let us not rest satisfied with our state, for it is most awful! But, with many a humble heart-felt prayer, entreat the Giver of every good gift to bestow upon us this invaluable blessing; and, whilst we peruse the sacred page of the Scripture, entreat him to open our understanding that we may understand it, and thus be made wise to the salvation of our souls.

REPENTANCE.

IN what does true penitence consist?—It is to know our sin, and our God—it is to know the miserable state of our soul, and the compassion of our Saviour—it is to forsake the one and embrace the other without delay—it is to mourn over our sins, and seek the pardon of them with tears. As soon as the "woman who was a sinner" knows that Jesus is in the house of the Pharisee, she runs thither—she does not wait till he is alone, till he is at prayers, or in the temple. Wherever she can find him, she presents herself before him. This is her Jesus; she fears him as her judge, she adores him as her God; but she

considers Him also as her Physician, her Father, her Saviour! She is silent, for how could she justify herself? But she weeps, and her tears are more powerful than words. She reflects on what she has done, and under the influence of sincere regret for past offences, resolves now to employ in the service of her God, what was formerly employed in dishonouring him.

With this design, she hastens to discharge her duty. As soon as she discovers that Jesus is in the feast-chamber, there she appears. How different from you, who consider, who hesitate, who deliberate, who wait till this pleasure be exhausted, till that accident impel you to form more determined resolutions, till the world no longer please, or, to speak more plainly, till you no longer please the world!

Do you forsake the world?—Often do you look back to see if it will regard you, and if fortune will again favour you with its smiles. Often you feign to quit it, that you may afford it a stronger wish to retain you; and though it may have many times deceived you, as Laban did Jacob, yet you consent to give it some years of further service.

Happy penitent—for I call you no longer sinful woman—happy penitent, come and teach us what it is to repent and be converted;—that it is not simply to promise, to deliberate, and to resolve; that it is to hasten like you, to discharge what we have promised. Come, teach us how to become truly and seriously penitent—it is to “sigh as the dove, to watch as the solitary sparrow on the house-top,” to weep, and when open scandal has been caused, to weep like you in public, notwithstanding the alarming fear of the vain judgment of men.

NO QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED BEFORE
COMING TO CHRIST.

MAY God keep us from attempting to work out our own salvation by the law; may we be kept from attempting to deprive the law of its justice, the gospel of its grace, and both of their chief glory.

Men dote upon establishing a righteousness of their own to bring them to Christ; and think it is presumptuous or licentious doctrine, that Christ may be theirs, and they receive him, considered simply as ungodly and enemies. But such are abominably injurious to the faith of Jesus Christ, and to the exceeding bounty of his grace, which saves from sin, without respect of any thing in the creature, that He himself may have the praise of the glory of his own grace.

- **Let** no man look for sanctification before he is justified; that is, let no man be discouraged from coming to Christ, because he finds not in himself that godly sorrow for sin, that ability to repent, that disposition of heart which he desires to have. We must first be in Christ, before we are new creatures. And this is a common fault among us; we would fain have something before we come: We think God's pardons are not free, but we must bring something in our hand. You know the proclamation runs thus—Buy without money; that is, come without any excellency at all; because we are commanded to come and take of the water of life freely. Therefore do not say, I have a sinful disposition and an hard heart, and cannot mourn for sin as I should;

therefore I will stay till that be done. It is all one as if thou shouldst say, I must go to the physician; but I will have my wounds well, and my disease healed first, and when that is done, I will go to the physician. What is the end of thy going to him, but to have thy disease healed? I say it is the same folly. The end of going to Christ is, that this very hardness of thy heart may be taken away—that this very deadness of thy spirit may be removed; that thou mayest be enlivened, quickened, healed; that thou mayest hate sin;—for he is thy physician:—look not for it beforehand: thou must first be in Christ, before thou canst be a new creature.

DANGER OF DELAY.

—But the deceit is short, is fruitless. The amazed spirit is about to dislodge. Who shall speak its terror and dismay, when he cries out in the bitterness of his soul, “What capacity has a diseased man—what time has a dying man—what disposition has a sinful man to acquire good principles, to unlearn false notions, to renounce bad practices, to establish right habits, to begin to love God, to begin to hate sin? How is the stupendous concern of salvation to be worked out by a mind incompetent to the most ordinary concerns?”

The infinite importance of what he has to do—the goading conviction that it must be done—the utter inability of doing good—the dreadful combination in his mind of both the necessity and incapacity—the despair of crowding the concerns of an age into a moment—the impossibility

of beginning a repentance which should have been completed—of setting about a peace which should have been concluded—of suing for a pardon which should have been obtained ;—all these complicated concerns, without strength, without time, without hope, with a clouded memory, a disjointed reason, a wounded spirit, undefined terrors, remembered sins, anticipated punishment, an angry God, an accusing conscience—altogether, intolerably augment the sufferings of a body which stands in little need of the insupportable burden of a distracted mind to aggravate its torments.

DANGER OF THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS.

THERE is no man's case so dangerous as his whom Satan hath persuaded that his own righteousness shall present him pure and blameless in the sight of God. If we could say, we were not guilty of any thing at all in our consciences, (we know ourselves far from this innocency—we cannot say we know nothing by ourselves—but if we could,) should we therefore plead not guilty before the presence of our Judge, that sees further into our hearts than we ourselves can do ? If our hands did never offer violence to our brethren, a bloody thought doth prove us murderers before him : If we had never opened our mouth to utter any scandalous, offensive, or hurtful word, the cry of our secret cogitations is heard in the ear of God : If we did not commit the sins which daily and hourly, either in deed, word, or thought we do commit ; yet in the good things which we do, how many defects are there inter-

mingled ! God, in that which is done, respecteth the mind and intention of the doer. Cut off then all those things wherein we have regarded our own glory—those things which men do to please men, and to satisfy our own liking—those things which we do for any by-respect, not sincerely and purely for the love of God ; and a small score will serve for the number of our righteous deeds. Let the holiest and best things we do be considered, we are never better affected unto God than when we pray ; yet when we pray, how are our affections many times distracted ! How little reverence do we show unto the grand Majesty of God, unto whom we speak ! How little remorse of our own miseries ! How little taste of the sweet influence of his tender mercies do we feel ! Are we not as unwilling many times to begin, and as glad to make an end ; as if in saying, *Call upon me*, he had set us a very burdensome task ?

THE RESPONSIBILITY ATTACHED TO SUPERIOR TALENTS.

It is doubtless an honour to be favoured with many talents ; but he on whom they have been conferred, does well to recollect the benevolent purposes for which they have been given, and the heavy load of duty which they impose. Are any blessed, then, with mental energies capable of ministering, in various ways, to the good of others ? Let them know that perverted intellect and genius, reduce men to the nearest possible resemblance to infernal spirits. I would not have the moral responsibility of a Voltaire, or a Hume,

or a Byron, resting on me, for thousands of worlds! On the other hand, when talents of a superior description are properly directed, and warmly engaged on the side of truth and religion, they prove essential blessings to the world. Wealth, too, is a talent, in its capabilities of a very high order. He who possesses it, without knowing how to use it for the glory of God and the good of men, has need to take care lest it prove a curse to him at last.

ON UNITING TALENTS WITH RELIGION.

GREAT talents are the gifts of God, and are, therefore, highly to be valued; but the pride with which they too often inspire their possessors, is extremely dangerous. It would be much better for you to be poor and ignorant, and satisfied with those around you, than to have superior abilities, and to look down with scorn on those whose merits and talents you think inferior to your own. Your qualifications, however extraordinary, are not your own work; and if you pervert them, they will only turn to your own condemnation, and double your guilt in the sight of God. Think less of your learning, your wit, your taste, your science, and your attractions, and pray to God to add humility, and all the Christian virtues, to your character; for, without these, your brightest talents can only serve to dazzle the world, but will avail nothing to your own salvation.

A SIGN OF AN UNRENEWED HEART

IF you have any known sin which you do not hate, and had not rather leave it than keep it, and do not pray, and strive, and watch against it, as far as you know and observe it, but rather excuse it, plead for it, desire it, and are loath to part with it, so that your will is habitually more for it than against it, it is a sign of an impenitent and unrenewed heart.

GENUINE REFORMATION OF CONDUCT.

AN unrenewed man may reform. Under the influence of shame, or remorse, or terror, or interest, he may improve his conversation, his temper, his manners; and this change may be gradual, and the result of much thought, strong resolution, and vigorous effort—and we see no reason to doubt that in some cases it may be permanent. But if this change has not sprung from the interference of Him who alone sets men free from sin—if it does not spring from a knowledge and faith of his mediation, and from those principles which this acknowledgment of his mediation involves—and if the change be not more radical and deep than we have now supposed,—the soul is as really under the dominion of evil as it was before. In that soul the reign of God is established no more than ever. It owns a law above his law—the law of its own inclinations and interests. And the struggle, to use a figure, is only a contest for precedence among the various bands of the enemy,—not a contest betwixt the interests of the enemy and those of God. It

is the conflict of corruption with corruption ; not of corruption with grace. It is an effort to give a new form to the old government, whilst all its worst corruptions are retained, not to subvert and abolish that government, and to substitute a new and holy one in its place.

PRODIGAL SON.

OVERWHELMED with grief, the prodigal son exclaimed, sighing, What have I abandoned, and what have I found ! O my father's house ! habitation of abundance, peace, and liberty, when shall I see thee again ? Far from thee, an unhappy slave, tormented by the recollection of my sins, devoured by remorse, covered with shame, I languish, I droop, I die : here " I perish with hunger." Ah ! " I will arise." Behold here the language of penitence ; behold the first expression of the new heart which grace has just created in him. I will arise, I will deceive the vigilance of the cruel master who tyrannizes over me ; I will go out of this strange land, which is desolated by famine and death. " I will arise," in spite of the railleries of libertines, in spite of the revolt of my senses, in spite of the repugnancy of nature, in spite of the ascendancy of my passions. " I will arise," whatever it may cost me : and what will it cost ? What more have I to sacrifice ? Alas ! I have given every thing to the world ; sin has deprived me of all : I have now nothing to offer but my tears, my griefs, and the confession of my crimes. Be it so ; full of confidence, " I will arise and go." But where shall this unfortunate son, this afflicted sinner, take refuge ? Does an

asylum remain open for him? O where shall he go?

Can you ask such a question? He will go to his father: "I will arise, and go to my father." What! go to that God whom he has insulted with so much audacity? Let him not deceive himself. No, he is no longer his father; he is an avenging God. Let him rather dread his indignation. He only fears his aversion and his absence; he only fears that he may not sufficiently love him. But how shall he be able to soften him? Ah, you little know the power of that divine love that inflames HIM! That love is stronger than the most inveterate habits: it breaks in pieces every chain: it is stronger than human respect—it braves it; it is stronger than death—it triumphs over it; it is stronger than the justice of God—it disarms it; it is stronger than the sovereign Judge—it converts him into a Father.

SCRIPTURE SUPERIOR TO AFFLICTION IN CONVERSION OF MEN.

THE scripture is full of instances, to prove that if the word of God will not awaken sinners, nothing will. And we see enough in these days to convince us of it. Men sometimes meet with things, by which we should think it impossible that they should not be reformed, if we did not see the fact. They sometimes hear the warnings of dying men, who are expecting to go to hell; they are affected for a while; but the solemn warning does but just touch them, and passes away. Sometimes they themselves are laid upon a bed of sickness and their lives hang in doubt

before them : they are brought to the sides of the grave, and their hearts are full of terror ; yet, if they recover, they soon forget it, and return to the ways of folly and wickedness. Sometimes this is repeated—they are taken sick again—are again in extreme danger—their hearts are again full of terror, and many promises and vows are made ; yet, on recovery, they forget all, and again return to sin and folly ! Such things may convince us, that where the word of God is not effectual, neither sickness, nor any thing else, is likely to be so.

ADOPTION.

THE brightest beam, the warmest ray of the fire of divine love that ever broke into the region of creation, and shone upon the children of men, was God's declaration—that the offspring of nature, the heirs of corruption and death, should be his own children, and the heirs of immortality and infinite fullness.—Who, upon such terms, would not choose to say to corruption, "Thou art my father ; and to the worm, thou art my brother and my sister ?" Infinite love surmounts all impossibilities. He deigns not to say to the miserable victim of corruption, descending into the unrelenting jaws of death, I will remit the sentence ; I will award the blow : No ; but he says, Let it fall ; be not afraid ; thou art *my son*. Look up to heaven ; behold the sun by day, and the moon and the stars by night. When your eyes can penetrate no further, call in your imagination, and soar infinitely beyond them. While you are walking in darkness, stumbling amongst

the rubbish of corruption, under the momentary apprehension of which shall be your last fall; when you shall never gather your feet, nor rear your head again upon the theatre of nature: then lift up your eyes. Do they fail you? No matter.—Give unbounded scope to your most towering conceptions; let them break through the barriers of creation—launch into the regions of eternity, the realms of uncreated day, and say, —Yonder I still live—there I have a Father still —if I am to be a reptile of nature no longer; still I am what is infinitely greater,—I am his son.

DIVINE GRACE VICTORIOUS.

WHEN all our spiritual foes rise up, as it were, to pursue us; when guilt, and terror, and despair surround us; when the wrath of God seems just overtaking us, and Satan is ready to seize us as his captives; when all seems lost, and self-condemned, and with no apparent way of escape, we can scarcely utter even a short impassioned prayer—at this gloomy moment divine grace hastens forward—a free pardon rescues the sinner; Satan and all his forces are stopped at the very instant of victory; their legions roll back with dismay; the deep swells around them; it repels, it covers, it overwhelms them; and the ransomed fugitive celebrates on the shore the glory of his deliverer.

HE that is entirely of the world finds it a world of conflicts, and cannot escape many a wound from it. But the worst of his case is, that he has no physician to apply to, “though the sorrow of the world worketh death.” What a blessed thing

it is to fight for the truth ; for the honour of God ; for everlasting life ; to strive for the noblest prize ; to wear celestial armour ; to have free access to that Tree, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations, and which heal every wound upon the immediate application ; to fight with the Captain at our side, and to be sure of the victory.

It were in vain to seek to escape from the condition of our place in the dominions of God. A mind of wandering and melancholy thought, impatient of the grievous realities of our state, may at some moments almost breathe the wish that we had been a different order of beings, in another dwelling place than this, and appointed on a different service to the Almighty. In vain ! Here still we are, to pass the first part of our existence in a world where it is impossible to be at peace, because there has come into it a mortal enemy to all that live in it. Amidst the darkness that veils from us the state of the universe, we would willingly be persuaded that this our world may be the only region (except that of penal justice), where the cause of evil is permitted to maintain a contest. Here, perhaps, may be almost its last encampment, where its prolonged power of hostility may be suffered, in order to give a protracted display of the manner of its appointed destruction. Here our lot is cast, on a ground so awfully preoccupied ; a calamitous distinction ! but yet a sublime one, if thus we may render to the Eternal King a service of a more arduous kind than it is possible to the inhabitants of any other world than this to render him ; and if thus we may be trained, through devotion and conformity to the Celestial Chief in this warfare, to

the final attainment of what he has promised, in so many illustrious forms, to him that overcometh. We shall soon leave the region where so much is in rebellion against our God. But we shall go where all that pass from our world must present themselves as from battle, or be denied to mingle in the eternal joys and triumphs of the conquerors.

METHOD OF LIVING BY FAITH.

WHEN a truth has fully received the sanction of the judgment, the second office of faith is, by attention and conception, to keep it habitually before the mind, so that it may produce its proper influence upon the character. This is to live by faith; and in this consists that operation of the great principle which effectually distinguishes it from all pretended feelings and impressions assuming its name. We speak, in common language, of a head-knowledge which does not affect the heart; and of a man who is sound in his creed, while he shows little of its influence upon his conduct. The mental condition of such a man presents a subject of intense interest. His alleged belief, it is probable, consists merely in words, or in arguing ingeniously on points to which he attaches no real value. These may have been impressed upon him by education; they may constitute the creed of a party to which he has devoted himself; and he may argue in support of them with all the energy of party zeal. In the same manner, a man may contend warmly in favour of compassion whose conduct shows a cold and barren selfishness: but this is not be-

nevolence ; and the other is not faith. Both are empty professions of a belief in certain truths, which have never fixed themselves in the mind so as to become regulating principles or moral causes in the mental constitution. We may indeed suppose another character, slightly removed from this, in which the truths have really received the approbation of the judgment, and yet fail to produce their proper influence. This arises from distorted moral habits, and a vitiated state of the moral faculties, which have destroyed the healthy balance of the whole economy of the mind. The consequence is, that the man perceives and approves of truths, without feeling their tendencies, and without manifesting their power.

Intimately connected with this subject, also, is a remarkable principle in our mental constitution, —namely, the relation between certain facts or truths, and certain moral emotions which naturally arise from them, according to the chain of sequences which has been established in the economy of the mind. A close connexion thus exists between our intellectual habits and our moral feelings which leads to consequences of the utmost practical moment. Though we have little immediate voluntary power over our moral emotions, we have a power over the intellectual processes with which these are associated. We can direct the mind to truths, and we can cherish trains of thought, which are calculated to produce correct moral feelings ; and we can avoid or banish mental images or trains of thought which have an opposite tendency. This is the power over the succession of our thoughts, the due exercise of which forms so important a feature of a

well-regulated mind in regard to intellectual culture ; its influence upon us as moral beings is of still higher and more vital importance.

The sound exercise of that mental condition which we call Faith consists, therefore, in the reception of certain truths by the judgment,—the proper direction of the attention to their moral tendencies,—and the habitual influence of them upon the feelings and the conduct. When the sacred writers tell us that, without faith it is impossible to please God,—and when they speak of a man being saved by faith,—it is not to a mere admission of certain truths as a part of his creed that they ascribe consequences so important ; but to a state in which these truths are uniformly followed out to certain results which they are calculated to produce, according to the usual course of sequences in every sound mind. This principle is strikingly illustrated by one of these writers, by reference to a simple narrative. During the invasion of Canaan by the armies of Israel, two men were sent forward as spies to bring a report concerning the city of Jericho. The persons engaged in this mission were received in a friendly manner by a woman whose house was upon the wall of the city ; when their presence was discovered, she hid them from their pursuers ; and finally enabled them to escape by letting them down by a cord from a window. Before taking leave of them, she expressed her firm conviction that the army to which they belonged was soon to take possession of Jericho, and of the whole country ; and she made them swear to her, that, when this should take place, they would show mercy to her father's house. The engagement was faithfully fulfilled. When the city

was taken, and the other inhabitants destroyed, the woman was preserved, with all her kindred. In this very simple occurrence, the woman is represented by the sacred writer as having been saved by faith. The object of her faith was the event which she confidently expected,—that the city of Jericho was to be destroyed. The ground of her faith was the rapid manner in which the most powerful nations had already fallen before the armies of Israel,—led, as she believed, by a divine power. Acting upon this conviction, in the manner in which a belief so deeply affecting her personal safety was likely to influence any sound mind, she took means for her preservation by making friends of the spies. Her faith saved her, because without it she would not have made this provision; but, unless she had followed out her belief to the measure which was calculated to effect this object, the mere belief of the event would have availed her nothing. When we therefore ascribe important results to faith, or to any other mental operation, we ascribe them, not to the operation itself, but to this followed out to the consequences which it naturally produces according to the constitution of the human mind. In the same manner, we may speak of one man in a certain state of danger or difficulty being saved by his wisdom, and another by his strength. In doing so, we ascribe such results, not to the mere possession of these qualities, but to the efforts which naturally arose from them in the circumstances in which the individual was placed. And when the inspired writer says, that without faith it is impossible to please God, he certainly refers to no mere mental impression, and to no barren system of opinions; but to the

reception of certain truths, which, in our present state of being, are entirely the objects of faith, and to all that influence upon the moral feelings and the character which these must produce upon every mind that really believes them.

NATURE AND PROVINCE OF FAITH.

LET us take the illustration of a man affected with a disease supposed to be mortal: he is told that a remedy has been discovered of infallible efficacy; and that a person is at hand who is ready to administer it. Does he perceive his danger; does he believe the virtue of the remedy; does he confide in the sincerity of the individual who offers it: this is faith. The immediate and natural result of his faith is, that he asks for the remedy which is offered; and this result is inseparable from such belief, according to the uniform sequence of volitions in every sound mind. The man who professes to admit the facts, and does not show such a result of belief, professes what he does not actually feel. If he perceives not the extent of his danger, he asks not the remedy, because he values it not; and the same effect may follow if he doubts either its efficacy or the sincerity of him who offers it. In this case, it is also to be observed, that a reflection is thrown upon the character of this individual, by imputing to him an offer of what he has either not the power or the intention to perform. But if the man really believes the truths, he applies for the remedy; and he receives it. Thus his faith saves him; because by means of it he sought the offered aid. Could we suppose him merely to

admit the facts, without asking the remedy, his belief would avail him nothing.

Such appears to be the simple view we are to take of Faith, when we apply it to the great benefits which are presented to us in the Christian revelation. This is addressed to us as beings in a state both of guilt and of depravity; and as having no means of our own by which we can rescue ourselves from condemnation and impurity. It unfolds a dispensation of peace, by which, in perfect consistency with the harmony of his character, the Deity offers mercy and forgiveness,—and an influence from himself which has power to purify the moral being. These benefits are conferred on every one who believes; the man who is convinced of his guilt and perceives his impurity; who feels his inability to rescue himself; who admits the efficacy of the remedy, and confides in the sincerity with which it is offered; this is he who believes. His faith saves him; because, acting on his conviction, according to the uniform sequence of volitions in every sound mind,—he asks the promised aid,—and asking, receives it. Much of the confusion in which the subject has been involved appears to have arisen from metaphysical refinements in which the various parts of this mental process are separated from each other. They form one harmonious whole, which cannot be broken. The man will not seek the remedy who believes not its efficacy, and perceives not his moral necessities; but, however he may profess to admit these facts, if he follows not out his belief to its natural result in applying for the remedy, his mere belief will not profit him. The grounds on which these truths are addressed to us are contained in

- that chain of evidence on which is founded the whole system of Christianity,—taken along with the conviction which every man receives of his actual moral condition, from the voice of conscience within. The sincerity of the offer we derive from our impression of the unchangeable attributes of the Deity. Accordingly, he who believes is said to give glory to God,—that is, to receive his statements with absolute confidence, and to form an honourable conception of the sincerity of his intentions. He who believes not rejects the statements of the Almighty as false,—and treats him with the contempt which we apply to one whom we suppose to promise what he has no intention to bestow. The man who comes to God with the hope of acceptance is therefore required to come in the assurance of faith,—or an implicit conviction that he is sincere in his intentions of bestowing the blessings which he offers; and whosoever hath not this assurance does dishonour to the divine character,—or “maketh God a liar.”
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ALLIES OF RELIGION.

THERE are a thousand allies of religion in the many aspects of nature, to the heart which education grants not wholly to the avocations of life, but opens to the remote relations of things, and the hour of musing. Whether we come to the ever-sounding sea; or bend on the high thunder-smitten hills; or go down into the dim-sounding and peopled forest, where the lion stands distinct but in twilight by the tusky roots of the immemorial tree; or whether, when evening hath

wept her cold and tearful dews, and darkness composes the hushed and decent earth, we watch the well-ordered stars coming forth, multitudes, ten-thousand-fold in beauty, that stud the dim hangings of the night ;—O ! there is a voice in them all, and man is made little by the things of the universe, that Christianity may find him humble, yet in love with greatness, and glad at her alone way to be exalted. The disciplined spirit of a man goes beyond the first appearances of things ; and if Christianity sharpen his native apprehension of their relations, he sees over all the world a spirit and interest, as really above the mere pictures of common observation, as the warm and animated beauty of life, that claims a thousand moral affections, is above the dumb and bloodless beauty of a statue.

A GOOD DIRECTION.

To obtain the aid of the Spirit, it is expressly given as a rule, in Scripture, to pray for it ; “If ye being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask it.” To have His continued operation in our hearts towards ultimate perfection, the rule is equally distinct in its parts,—not to grieve the Holy Spirit ;—not to do despite to it ;—to walk after the Spirit ;—to be led by it ; and in the duties which these imply, to have so much, that more may be given us.

Prayer is the first rule of our sanctification : while we honour God over all,—by our submission ; and Christ,—that for his sake, and in his

name, is our supplication; and the Great Spirit that can give us at once the love of God without any prior fear,—by our earnestness for his aid,—aware of our own frailty, and His eternal power and office graciously assumed to raise our hearts to those heavenly things after which it is the glory of man to aspire;—the influence of this exercise is doubly in our favour; sanctifying us even while it engages the sanctifying Spirit; raising us above earthly affections, while it asks so to be renovated; and mingling deep resolutions of amendment with every confession of frailty, and every supplication for the aid of Heaven. In him who ceases not to invoke the Spirit, his devotion becomes a sublimity of thought and purpose; and his heart in humility, is yet gradually raised in devotedness of determined and noble aim; and this is the fine obedience that grows from both,—“Here am I, Lord, send me.”

To grow in the divine life by the continuance of the same aid, we must be led by the Spirit, and again entreat his assistance; giving scrupulous attention to every motion of conscience, His organ; never banishing, but seeking to renew every feeling of devotion,—in the faith, that, in so endeavouring, we give occasion to that mighty Operator who works when we work, who supersedes not, but co-operates with ourselves.

SELF-EXAMINATION.

Did a man accustom himself each night, before addressing himself to sleep, strictly to review the conduct of the day, his thoughts, his words, his actions, wherein at fault and wherein worthy

of our high nature,—his circumspection would grow clear and watchful, and his apprehensions tender,—the elements these of conscience, the representative of God, and the organ of His Spirit in man ;—his soul would come forth every night and sit on her clear tribunal, and ere long the man would grow afraid to offend, as if there were a higher power within him, and distinct from himself. In worldly prudence, in religion, here is an equivalent to the most distinct confession and its obligation, on the principle of self-consistency, to amendment ; whilst progress is reported, and the points to be corrected clearly marked. To a quicker conviction of the tempting folly or sin when it again approaches, is added a strong suggested argument from the severe occasions of self-rebuke ; nice self-honour becomes a caution against vice,—the tender feeler of the soul—a shrinking apprehension from self-stigmatised guilt ; and to such a man there is a higher value in that Heaven which holds us above anxieties of duty,—above all temptations to low vice.

SOMETHING EASIER TO BE CONSIDERED
THAN NAMED.

THE first and unceasing requisite towards exciting the love of God in man, and maintaining it, is a strong representation of Divine goodness incalculable, heightened to the human heart by a rueful detail of our own sin and rebellion and unhappiness, again stamping the incontrovertible character of love on Him who forbears in the one, who is reconciled in the second, who is our

heaven in the third,—who hath saved us in all. And in no mode of instruction, nor in any season, is this inculcation to be forgotten ; impressed in its benefits which they can understand on infants' minds, and in its deeper characteristics ever as they grow up ; made to conquer indifference, and peculiarly impressed on every moment of excitement ; inwoven in curiosity and every suggestion of the soul, that when every cloud passes by and obstructions cease for a little, it may be mirrored in the heart, in the pure depths of our affections.

AN ARGUMENT, AND ITS CERTAIN RESULT.

THE declaration of our Saviour is borne out by experience, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." Habits of just thought, as well remarked by Paley, grow from good habits of action. It is only to undepraved hearts of natural and good issues, to men who acknowledge in their lives the restraint of Christian precepts, that their value, and that stamp of divine excellence which makes up the strong internal evidence in their favour, can have their weight ; *vice versa*, these are nothing to the sensualist. The powers of his understanding are weakened by vice, and the tender apprehension of whatever is excellent. To the tacit rejection of religion implied in his daring to do what that religion forbids, is superadded this silent argument in his mind in favour of continued indulgence—the second act, in virtue of its numerical name, takes for granted that the question was settled on a former occasion, that religion

has no right to interfere; the same happens in a third instance, and in a fourth, with an increasing power of precedent; and so on, till at last the plea is lost sight of, having been found good in so many instances. In the upshot is a being callous to moral and religious arguments, or perhaps a literal infidel. And reason and imagination, these godlike powers, become ministers of a base propensity. Faith shuts her eyes and dies within him. He cannot wish for the Heaven of God and of the Holy Jesus,—and of the Spirit, that Watchful Fire, that lives above stain,—and of the Angels, beautifully styled in their purity of obedience and feeling, the Ardours of Heaven,—and of the sanctified from among men, “dove-hearted saints and prophets eagle-eyed,” walking pure from degraded sin,

“High in salvation and the climes of bliss.”

THE TRULY WISE MAN.

WITH men, indeed, a little science may make a great show; but he only is wise in God's esteem who is wise unto salvation. Give me a man as full of policy as was Ahithophel, of eloquence as was Tertullus, of learning as the Athenians were in Paul's time. If with Ahithophel he plot against the people of God, with Tertullus have the poison of asps under his lips, with those Athenians be wholly given to superstition; for all his policy, eloquence, and learning, one may be bold to call him fool in scripture language. The learned logician, whom Satan daily deceiveth by his sophistry, and keeps from offering up to God reasonable service, is no better than a fool

for all his skill. Nor the subtle arithmetician, who hath not learned to number his days, that he might apply his heart to saving wisdom. No, nor the cunning orator, who, although he be of singular abilities in the art of persuading men, is of Agrippa's temper himself, but "almost persuaded to be a Christian."

THE BELIEVER'S PRIVILEGE.

THE Gospel's glory is, that it is the ministration of the Spirit. The great privilege of believers is, that the Lord manifests himself to them as he doth not to the world. When he manifests his authority in the command, it is then powerful; when he manifests his goodness and truth in the promise, it is full of sweetness; when he manifests his wrath in the threatening, it awes the soul; when he manifests his glory in the face of Christ, it is ravishing, reforming, attracting.

THE WAY TO A FULL CONVICTION OF THE TRUTH.

THE life of the active Christian is the labour of the bee, which all day long is flying from the hive to the flower, and from the flower to the hive; but all his business is confined to fragrantcy, and productive of sweets. There are many promises made to perseverance in the divine life, and this is one—"Then shall we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning, and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."

fled; and what do we behold in their room, but the funeral pall and shroud, a palace in mourning, a nation in tears, and the shadow of death settled over both like a cloud! O the unspeakable vanity of human hopes! The incurable blindness of man to futurity! ever doomed to grasp at shadows, to seize with avidity what turns to dust and ashes in his hand, "to sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind."

A HAPPY LIFE.

THE happiest life of individuals, and the happiest state of society, is that which affords the fewest remarkable events. To live quiet and respected, to be peacefully useful in our circle, to possess a clear conscience, to enjoy communion with God our Saviour while we live, and to die at peace with God and man, form the substance of all that a wise man can desire as to this world.

DUTY OF LOOKING FOR AN ABIDING CITY.

SINCE we stay not here, being people but of a day's abode, and our age is like that of a fly, and contemporary with that of a gourd, we must look somewhere else for an abiding city, a place in another country to fix our house in, whose walls and foundation is God, where we must find rest, or else be restless for ever. For whatsoever ease we can have or fancy here, is shortly to be changed into sadness or tediousness. It goes away too soon, like the periods of our life; or stays too long, like the sorrows of a sinner. Its

own weariness, or a contrary disturbance, is its load ; or it is eased by its revolution into vanity and forgetfulness. And where either there is sorrow, or an end of joy, there can be no true felicity ; which, because it must be had by some instrument, and in some period of our durations, we must carry up our affections to the mansion prepared for us above, where eternity is the measure, felicity is the state, angels are the company, the Lamb is the light, and God is the portion and inheritance.

If we would wish our pleasures to be immortal, let us set them on things above ; for all on earth is shadow ; all beyond is substance.

HEAVEN THE PROPER OBJECT OF THE BELIEVER'S CONTEMPLATION.

SHOULD not our interest in heaven, and our relation to it, continually keep our hearts upon it ? There our Father keeps his court. We call him, Our Father who art in heaven. Unworthy children ! that can be so taken up in their play, as to be mindless of such a Father. There also is Christ our Head, our Husband, our Life ; and shall we not look towards him, and send to him, as often as we can, till we come to see him face to face ? Since the heavens must receive him until the times of the restitution of all things ; let them also receive our hearts with Him. There also is New Jerusalem, which is the mother of us all. And there are multitudes of our elder brethren. There are our friends and old acquaintance, whose society, in the flesh, we so much delighted

in, and whose departure hence we so much lamented ; and is this no attraction to thy thoughts ! If they were within thy reach on earth, thou wouldst go and visit them, and why not oftener visit them in spirit, and rejoice beforehand to think of meeting them there ? Socrates rejoiced that he should die, because he believed he should see Homer, Hesiod, and other eminent persons. How much more do I rejoice, said a pious old minister, who am sure to see Christ my Saviour, the eternal Son of God, in his assumed flesh ; besides so many wise, holy, and renowned patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs ! A believer should look to heaven, and contemplate the blessed state of the saints, and think with himself, " Though I am not yet so happy as to be with you, yet this is my daily comfort, you are my brethren and fellow-members in Christ, and therefore your joys are my joys, and your glory, by this near relation, is my glory, especially while I believe in the same Christ, and hold fast the same faith and obedience, by which you were thus dignified, and rejoice in spirit with you, and congratulate your happiness in my daily meditations."

CHRISTIAN VOYAGE.

How difficult, duly considered, is the Christian's passage through life ! How marvellous his safe arrival in heaven ! It appears, indeed, to be nothing else than one of the greatest continued wonders of almighty grace to man. If a man were commanded to put to sea by himself in a small open boat, without any sustenance but

what might fall from the skies, and with no direction but a chart and compass, and thus to pass over a wide and tempestuous ocean; some faint picture might be formed of the Christian's voyage to heaven. He too, in a feeble bark, has no chart but the word of God, no compass but the Spirit of God, no provision but the daily grace of God in Christ; no safety from the raging waves of the world, or the roaring winds of the evil spirit, but the power of God; no ability to keep himself for one moment from sinking, but through the faith which God supplieth; and no hope of getting safe to the heavenly shore, but from the truth of God in Christ Jesus. And indeed, when a Christian considers all these perils on the one hand, and his own weakness on the other, it seems an act of most astonishing love and omnipotence, that he should ever reach the kingdom of heaven. He feels it to be mercy, and faithfulness, and rich bounty, and unspeakable kindness altogether, from beginning to end, and is at times lost in wonder, love, gratitude, and praise, for so great, so unmerited, so eternal a salvation. Seeing then these things are so, verily he ought to watch and pray, that he may continue in faith, and charity, and in holiness with sobriety, unto the end.

ON BRIDLING THE TONGUE.

It hath been a frequent confession of wise and good men, that they have often lamented their speaking too much, but seldom their holding the tongue. In the multitude of words there will be some folly, something that will not tend to edifi-

cation, something that may rather weary and offend than delight and improve.

This evil of overspeaking usually comes from an overweening opinion of self. Unchastised and unsubdued self is fond of its own display; although it can display nothing, or, were it not deceiving and deceived, nothing but its own wretchedness and ruin. The apostle hath a striking hint for professors of religion: "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."

ON IMITATING THE SYMPATHY OF CHRIST.

REJOICE that in the heavenly state, Jesus "still remembers his tears, his agonies, and cries;" and though no friend on earth should remain to join his voice with your prayer, or to mingle his tears with yours, you can look up to one in heaven, who is touched with the feeling of your infirmities, and "who suffered being tempted, that he might know how to succour them that are tempted." He delights to wipe the streaming eye, and to still the quaking heart. Confide in him in the worst season. In the midnight hour consider that God dwells in the thick darkness, and in the wildest tumults of the storm, that his way is in the whirlwind, and that he sits on the floods. And show, that the scenes of sorrow through which you have passed, have taught you promptitude in mercy. You have been in the house of mourning; let the widow see that you know her heart, and the orphan that his loss is yours. Have you had affliction on your bodies, or tempta-

tions in your souls? let the sick and tempted have as much as possible of your care. In studying the sympathy of our Lord, you must labour not only to catch its tones of tenderness, and its looks of pity, but to imitate its gifts and deeds of mercy.

A RELIEF TO THE CHRISTIAN'S FEARS.

Ye who have been seeking Jesus who was crucified, have no cause for fear. What is it that terrifies you in the exercises of the sanctuary? Is it the glory to which Jesus is now raised? His heart is the same on the throne as on the cross. The mercy which shed so sweet a lustre round the cross, is now one of the bright ornaments of his throne. Is it the opposition of your enemies that alarms you? They were vanquished when your Lord was crucified; and by the blood of the Lamb you shall be more than conquerors. Is it the consciousness of guilt that troubles you? He will not punish you for that for which he bled and died. Are you afraid that the folly, and the inconstancy of your hearts, will induce him to abandon you? Such fears show that you are jealous of yourselves; but there is virtue in the cross to enlighten you in all wisdom, and to confirm you in all goodness. Do you fear that the gloom on your spirits, in consequence of afflicting dispensations, will unfit you for his service? "The way of the Lord is strength to the upright." And do the terrors of death and judgment agitate you? Behold in Jesus, who was crucified, a hope for the one, which shall not make you ashamed, and a plea for the other, which shall not shame you.

CHRISTIAN FORTITUDE.

THE earth may shake, the pillars of the world may tremble under us; the countenance of heaven may be appalled, the sun may lose his light, the moon her beauty, the stars their glory; but concerning the man that trusteth in God, if the fire have proclaimed itself unable so much as to singe a hair of his head; if lions, beasts ravenous by nature, and keen with hunger, being set to devour, have, as it were, religiously adored the flesh of the faithful man; what is there in the world that shall change his heart, overthrow his faith, alter his affection towards God, or the affection of God towards him? If I be of this note, who shall make a separation between me and my God? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No; I am persuaded that neither tribulation, nor anguish, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword, nor death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall ever prevail so far over me. I know in whom I have believed; I am not ignorant whose precious blood hath been shed for me; I have a shepherd full of kindness, full of care, and full of power; unto him I commit myself; his own finger hath engraven this sentence in the tables of my heart, "Satan hath desired to winnow thee as wheat; but I have prayed that thy faith fail not;" therefore the assurance of my hope I will labour to keep as a jewel unto the end, and by labour, through the gracious mediation of his prayer, I shall keep it.

SLANDER.

Too many there are, who, though they do not rob their neighbour of his substance, yet do not think much of taking from him his good name. But if a good name is better than precious ointment, if it is more valuable to an honest man than any worldly possession whatever, yea, I may add, than life itself; to deprive him of it, or to take measures to that purpose, is an act of the most cruel and atrocious injustice. The man of religion, therefore, will be so far from bearing false witness against another, that he will be cautious how he insinuates any thing to his disadvantage. Nay, he will be inclined to put a favourable construction upon actions that are doubtful, and even upon those which may be in some respects blame-worthy. "Put them in mind," says the apostle to Titus, "to speak evil of no man."

DUTY OF RESTITUTION.

HAVE you, in any way, injured another? It is not enough to say, and to say with grief, "I do remember my faults." You are bound in duty to repair the injury, as much and as speedily as possible. Have you defrauded another of his property? You are bound to restore it, and with interest too. Have you injured your neighbour's character, by defamation and slander? You are bound to explain and vindicate his character in the most explicit terms. Have you cooled the heart of your brother by loose talk? Have you perverted his principles? You are bound to use ev

to counteract the influence of such deadly evil, and to furnish him with the knowledge of scriptural truth. Have you injured the health of your friend, his peace of mind, his family comfort ; have you in any way drawn him into sin, temptation, and danger ? You are bound, by every tie of humanity and justice, by every bond of reason and religion, to repair the awful mischief you have done, and to benefit your friend by every possible means. Repentance is nothing without reformation ; and reformation, in many instances, is a mere name, without *restitution*.

SWEARING NO PROOF OF BRAVERY.

Do men reckon it a sign of bravery to use freedom with the name of God Almighty ? If this is bravery, I will tell you another way in which you may distinguish your courage, by showing that you fear neither God nor man. Speak contemptuously of your king : Let his name be treated by you with as much contempt as ever you showed to the name of God Almighty. Why do you not make it evident that you fear the gallows as little as the lake of fire and brimstone ?

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

SUCH as do not truly know God, can never sincerely aim at the glory of God in what they do : for what I do not know, I cannot love ; what I do not love, I cannot desire ; what I do not desire, I can never intend. And, therefore, if I do not know God, I can never intend his glory in

my actions; and if I do not intend his glory in my actions, I sin upon that very account, because I do not intend his glory.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRUE AND FALSE ZEAL.

FALSE zeal is uncertain and mortal: it must be fanned by the gale of adventitious circumstances; it is merely occasional; it intermits; it is a meteor which streams through the sky with momentary beauty; now it sparkles; now it expires. Not so pure and undefiled zeal: this is permanent;—kindled by the breath of the Almighty, it shines like the glory of the day, and is destined to shine when that glory is turned into gloom;—destined to soar above pyramids, and hills, and clouds, and stars;—destined to survive the catastrophe of the earth and the visible heavens, and then to mingle with the flame of devotion, which blazes eternally around the throne of God.

THANKFULNESS.

OUR whole life should speak nothing but thankfulness; every condition and place we are in should be a witness of our thankfulness: this will make the times and places we live in the better for us. When we ourselves are monuments of God's mercy, it is fit we should be patrons of his praises, and leave monuments to others. We should think life is given us to do something better than to live in; we live not to live; our life is not the end of itself, but the

praise of the Giver. God hath joined his glory and our happiness together ; it is fit we should refer all that is good to his glory, who hath joined his glory to our best good in being glorified in our salvation. Praise is a just and due tribute for all God's blessings, for what else do the best favours of God especially call for at our hands ? How do all creatures praise God but by our mouths ? It is a debt always owing, always paying ; and the more we pay, the more we shall owe. Upon the due discharge of this debt, the soul will find much peace. A thankful heart to God for his blessings is the greatest blessing of all. Were it not for a few gracious souls, what honour should God have of the rest of the unthankful world ? which should stir us up the more to be trumpets of God's praises in the midst of his enemies ; because this (in some sort) hath a prerogative above our praising God in heaven ; for there God hath no enemies to dishonour him.

RICHES NOT DIGNITY.

THE world cannot show us a more exalted character than that of a truly religious philosopher, who delights to turn all things to the glory of God, who, from the objects of his sight, derives improvement to his mind, and in the glass of things temporal sees the image of things eternal. Let a man have all the world can give him, he is still miserable if he has a grovelling, unlettered, indevout mind. Let him have his gardens, his fields, his woods, and his lawns, for grandeur, ornament, plenty, and gratification ;

while at the same time God is not in all his thoughts : and let another have neither field nor garden ; let him only look at nature with an enlightened mind,—a mind which can see and adore the Creator in his works, can consider them as demonstrations of his power, his wisdom, his goodness, his truth—this man is greater, as well as happier, in his poverty, than the other in his riches. The one is but little higher than a beast, the other but little lower than an angel.

USE OF RICHES.

How much positive evil may wealth be the means of preventing or removing ! How much positive good may it be the instrument of promoting or confirming ! How many deserts can it make to “blossom as the rose !” How many habitations of distress can it transform into the abodes of peace, of joy, of praise ! How many dying pillows can it smooth ! How many “widow’s hearts” can it cause “to sing for joy !” To how many villages can it send the “glorious gospel !” To how many parts of our earth, now “in the region and shadow of death,” can it be the cause of saying, “Arise, shine, for the light is come, and the glory of the Lord is arisen upon thee !” It can be the gale of heaven wafting missionaries to distant coasts ; the tongue of the learned, addressing all nations in their own language, and declaring the “wonderful works of God ;” the instrument of accelerating the triumphs of Emanuel upon earth, and facilitating his “seeing the travail of his soul until he is satisfied.”

DANGER OF RICHES.

How few are aware of the danger of riches ! Instead of fearing, do not almost all covet an exalted rank ? The affluent, in general, desire no better portion than their temporal possessions, and consider not that these may be the means of excluding them from heaven. On the very same principle also, the poor repine at the appointment of God, when they ought to be thankful, that he has placed them in a situation the most favourable to religion. Surely we should be more anxious for spiritual advantages than those which are merely secular, and pray to be preserved from the love of money, through which so many have forsaken Christ and perished eternally.

PLEASURE ATTENDING THE EXERCISE OF
BENEVOLENCE.

If there be a pleasure on earth which angels cannot enjoy, and which they might almost envy man the possession of, it is the power of relieving distress. If there be a pain which devils might pity man for enduring, it is the death-bed reflection, that we have possessed the power of doing good, but that we have abused and perverted it to purposes of ill.

Liberality is never so beautiful, as when the hand which betows the gift is concealed.

It is found by experience, that such Christians as are most forward to supply the wants of the

poor, boldly adventuring their goods upon the waters, do most of all thrive, and prosper in the world.

HOW TO LIVE UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD.

It becomes the Christian never to enter upon any course of conduct, however trivial, while a doubt of its propriety continues on his mind,—never to tamper, under any circumstances, with a conscientious doubt. “He that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” Aim, therefore, in all things to act as one “that feareth always.” Walk circumspectly and cautiously through the world, seeking purity in the midst of its pollutions. Always in a questionable matter adopt that course which is more likely to tend to the glory of God, than to the gratification of the propensities of your own deceitful heart. Let your motive be the love of God—your aim the glory of God—and the result for which you are in search, God’s blessing and favour. Let it be your endeavour, as far as possible, to give to earth, in your society, your pursuits, your habits, and your affections, and unearthly characters;—to breathe in it something of the holy atmosphere of heaven;—to spread the sacred influence of Scriptural principle over the sphere in which you move;—to win others round you to join in the same blessed course;—and endeavour daily to attain a nearer resemblance to him whom you adore, and a more intimate fellowship with him whom you love. This is to keep yourself “unspotted from the world.”

DECISION.

THE intercession of Christ at the right hand of God ought to make us decided, undaunted, and zealous in the profession of his gospel. Too many bear his name, who neither wear his image, nor keep his commands. Dreading the ridicule of the scorner, and the persecution of the ungodly, they do not go forth without the camp to follow the Captain of salvation, bearing his reproach. A timid time-serving spirit casts dishonour upon Christ. What! did he engage to redeem us, and forget his solemn promise? Did he leave the arduous work unfinished? Has he forfeited his claim to our gratitude and obedience? Did he descend into the grave to moulder there and see corruption? Christians, you know both where he is, and what he is doing. The eyes of your understanding are enlightened by the anointing of the Spirit, you see him clothed with light and glory, continually carrying on his gracious mediation, to advance your best interests. And while he acknowledges you before God, will you not openly confess him before men? While he successfully pleads your cause in heaven, will you not boldly plead his cause on earth? Let it be made manifest, whose you are, and whom you serve.

PEACE.

THERE is no peace which can ever be incorporated with a worldly or an irreligious life—no peace which can accord with the ignorance or the pride of infidelity—with the presumption of the

scorner—or with the impenitence of the hardened. But great peace have they who live by the faith of the Son of God, and who love God's law. Nothing shall offend them, whatever may be their lot, and whatever may be the department of duty, or the course of discipline selected for them. The peace of God rules in their hearts, amidst all the vicissitudes of this uncertain world; and they go from strength to strength, while they anticipate, with faith and confidence, the blessedness and the security of an eternal world.

If they shall remain long in this world, they believe and know that God is with them. If "the time of their departure is at hand," they are as firmly persuaded by the Lord Jesus Christ, that they shall be with God. "The God of hope fills them with all joy and peace in believing; and they abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." He will not forsake the works of his hands; nor will he suffer them to be tempted or afflicted above what they are able to bear.

Amidst the storms and tempests of the world, there is a perfect calm in the breast of those who not only do the will of God, but "love" to do it. They are at peace with God, by the blood of reconciliation; at peace with themselves by the answer of a good conscience, and the subjection of those desires which war against the soul; at peace with all men by the spirit of charity; and the whole creation is so at peace with them, that "all things work together for their good."—No external troubles can rob them of this "great peace;" no offences or stumbling-blocks, which are thrown in their way by persecution or tempt

ation, by the malice of enemies, by any thing they see, hear of, or feel, can detain or divert them from their course. Heavenly love surmounts every obstacle, and runs with delight "the way of God's commandments."

CONTENTMENT.

The Lord of men and angels was also the king of sufferings; and if thy coarse robe trouble thee, remember the swaddling-clothes of *Jesus*; if thy bed be uneasy, yet it is not worse than his manger; and it is no sadness to have a thin table, if thou callest to mind that the king of heaven and earth was fed with a little breast-milk; and yet besides all this, he suffered all the sorrows which we deserved. We therefore have great reason to sit down upon our own hearths, and warm ourselves at our own fires, and feed upon content at home. For it were a strange pride to expect to be more gently treated by the divine providence than the best and wisest men, than apostles and saints, nay the Son of the eternal God, the heir of both the worlds

THANKSGIVING.

WE are to give thanks to God. To God, I say; that is to *Him*, unto whom we are obliged, not for some small and inconsiderable trifles, but for the most weighty and invaluable benefits; from whom we receive not few or some, but all good things; whatever is necessary for our sustenance; convenient for our use, pleasant for our

enjoyment; not only those that come immediately from his hand, but what we obtain from others, who from him receive both the will and the power, the means and the opportunities of doing us good; to whom we owe, not only what we ever did or do at present possess, or can hereafter hope for of good; but what we were, are, or shall ever be in capacity to receive any; to the Author, Upholder, and Preserver of our being, without whose goodness we had never been, and without whose care we cannot subsist one moment.

To Him, who is the Lord and true owner of all things we partake of; whose air we breathe, whose ground we tread on, whose food sustains us; whose wholly we are ourselves, both the bodies we carry about us, (which are the work of his hands,) and the soul we think with, which was breathed from his mouth.

To Him, who hath created a whole world to serve us,—a spacious, a beautiful, a stately world for us to inhabit and to disport in; who hath subjected so fair a territory to our dominion, and consigned to our use so numerous a progeny of goodly creatures, to be managed, to be governed, to be enjoyed by us.

So that wherever we direct our eyes, whether we reflect them inward upon ourselves, we behold his goodness to occupy and penetrate the very root and centre of our beings, or extend them abroad toward the things about us, we may perceive ourselves inclosed wholly, and surrounded with his benefits. At home we find a comely body framed by his curious artifice, various organs fitly proportioned, situated, and tempered for strength, ornament, and motion, actuated by

a gentle heat, and invigorated with lively spirits, disposed to health, and qualified for a long endurance; subservient to a soul imbued with divers senses, faculties, and powers, apt to inquire after, pursue, and perceive various delights and contents. To the satisfaction of which all extrinsical things do minister matter and help; by his kind disposal, who furnishes our palates with variety of delicious fare, entertains our eyes with pleasant spectacles, ravishes our ears with harmonious sounds, perfumes our nostrils with fragrant odours, cheers our spirits with comfortable gales, "fills our hearts with food and gladness," supplies our manifold needs, and protects us from innumerable dangers. *To Him*, who hath inspired us with immortal minds, and impressed upon them perspicuous characters of his own divine essence; hath made us, not in some superficial lineaments, but in our most intimate constitution, to resemble himself, and to partake of his most excellent perfections; an extensive knowledge of truth, a vehement complacency in good, a forward capacity of being completely happy, (according to our degree, and within our sphere.) To which blessed end, by all suitable means (of external ministry and interior assistance,) he faithfully conducts us; revealing to us the way, urging us in our process, reclaiming us when we deviate: engaging us by his commands, soliciting us by gentle advices, encouraging us by gracious promises; instructing us by his holy word, and admonishing us by his loving Spirit. *To Him*, who vouchsafes to grant us a free access unto, a constant intercourse and a familiar acquaintance with, himself; to esteem and style us his *friends* and *children*; to invite us frequently, and entertain us kindly, with

those most pleasant delicacies of spiritual repast ; yea, to visit us often at our home, and (if we admit) to abide and dwell with us ; indulging us in the enjoyment of that presence, wherein the life of all joy and comfort consists, and to behold the light of his all-cheering countenance. Is there any thing more ! Yes : *To Him*, who to redeem us from misery, and to advance our estate, hath infinitely debased himself, and eclipsed the brightness of his glorious Majesty ; not disdaining to assume us into a near affinity, yea, into a perfect union with himself ; to inhabit our frail and mortal nature, to undergo the laws and conditions of humanity, to appear in our shape, and converse, as it were, upon equal terms with us, and at last to taste the bitter cup of a most painful and disgraceful death for us.

Yea, *to Him*, who not only descended from his imperial throne, became a subject, and (which is more) a servant for our sake ; but designed thereby to exalt us to a participation of his royal dignity, his divine nature, his eternal glory and bliss ; submitting crowns and sceptres to our choice,—crowns that cannot fade, and sceptres that can never be extorted from us.

Farther yet, *to Him*, the excellent quality, the noble end, the most obliging manner of whose beneficence doth surpass the matter thereof, and greatly augment the benefits ; who, not compelled by any necessity, not obliged by any law, (or previous compact,) not induced by any extrinsic arguments, not inclined by our merits, not wearied with our importunities, not instigated by troublesome passions of pity, shame, or fear, (as we are wont to be,) not flattered with promises of recompense, nor bribed with expectation of

emolument, thence to accrue unto himself; but being absolute master of his own actions, only both lawgiver and counsellor to himself, all-sufficient, and incapable of admitting any accession to his perfect blissfulness,—most willingly and freely, out of pure bounty and good-will, is our Friend and Benefactor; preventing not only our desires, but our knowledge; surpassing not our deserts only, but our wishes, yea, even our conceits, in the dispensation of his inestimable and unrequitable benefits; having no other drift in the collation of them, besides our real good and welfare, our profit and advantage, our pleasure and content.

To Him, who not lately began, or suddenly will cease, that is either uncertain or mutable in his intentions; but from everlasting designed, continues daily, and will (if we suffer him) to all eternity persevere unmovable in his resolutions to do us good.

To Him, whom no ingratitude, no undutiful carriage, no rebellious disobedience of ours, could for one minute wholly remove or divert from his steady purpose of caring for us; who regards us, though we do not attend to him—procures our welfare, though we neglect his concerns—employs his restless thought, extends his watchful eye, exerts his powerful arm, is always mindful, and always busy to do us good;—watching over us when we sleep, and remembering us when we forget ourselves; in whom yet it is infinite condescension to think of us, who are placed so far beneath his thoughts; to value us, who are but dust and dirt; not to despise and hate us, who are really so despicable and unworthy. For, “though he dwelleth on high,” saith

the Psalmist truly and emphatically, "he humbleth himself to behold the things that are done in heaven and earth."

To Him that is as merciful and gracious, as liberal and munificent towards us—that not only bestows on us more gifts, but pardons us more debts, forgives us more sins, than we live minutes—that with infinite patience endures, not only our manifold infirmities and imperfections, but our petulant follies, our obstinate perversenesses, our treacherous infidelities;—overlooks our careless neglects, and our wilful miscarriages;—puts up with the exceedingly many outrageous affronts, injuries, and contumelies continually offered to his supreme Majesty, by us base worms, whom he hath always under his feet, and can crush to nothing at his pleasure.

To Him yet, who, as St. James saith, "giveth freely, and upbraideth no man;" who calls us neither very frequently, nor over-strictly to account; who exacts of us no impossible, no very difficult, no greatly burdensome or costly returns—being satisfied with the cheerful acceptance of his favours, the hearty acknowledgments of his goodness, the sincere performance of such duties, to which our own welfare, comfort, and advantage (rightly apprehended) would otherwise abundantly dispose us.

To Him, lastly, whose benefits to acknowledge, is the greatest benefit of all; to be enabled to thank him who deserves our greatest thanks; to be sensible of whose beneficence, to meditate on whose goodness, to admire whose excellency, to celebrate whose praise, is heaven itself and paradise, the life of angels, the quintessence of joy, the supreme degree of felicity.

In a word—to *Him*, whose benefits are immensely great, innumerable many, inexpressibly good and precious. For, “who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can show forth all his praise?” said he who had employed often his most active thoughts, and his utmost endeavours thereupon, and was incomparably better able to do it.

To this God, to this great, to this only Benefactor of ours, we owe this most natural and easy, this most just and equal, this most sweet and pleasant duty of giving thanks. To whom, if we wilfully refuse, if we carelessly neglect to pay it, I shall only say thus much, that we are not only monstrously ungrateful, and horribly wicked; but abominably foolish, and deplorably miserable. I shall repeat this sentence once again, and wish it may have its due effect upon us:—To this great, to this only Patron and Benefactor of ours, if we do not in some measure discharge our due debt of gratitude for his inestimable benefits and mercies, we are to be adjudged not only most prodigiously unthankful, most detestably impious, but most wofully stupid also and senseless, most desperately wretched and unhappy.

SPIRIT OF DEVOTION.

THE spirit of devotion removes from the worship of God the perception of tediousness, and with that also every disposition to censure or cavil at particular phrases, or expressions used in public worship. All such faults, even if they be real, and such observations upon them, are

absorbed by the immense importance of the business in which we are engaged. Quickness in discovering blemishes of this sort is not the gift of a pious mind ; still less either levity or acrimony in speaking of them.

EVERY EVENT FRAUGHT WITH INSTRUCTION
TO THE CHRISTIAN.

A SOUL has no sooner received the Spirit of God, and is truly animated by it, than all its life is almost invisible and interior ; all that it does, proceeds from this divine and invisible principle which fills it. Actions, even the most common, become holy by the secret faith that purifies them ; whether it rejoices or weeps, whether it may be in elevation or obscurity, abundance or want, health or sickness, it finds in all these conditions some sources of devout reflection. It looks upon every object it beholds only with the eye of faith. The events and vicissitudes of the world ; the revolutions of states and empires ; the fall or rise of families ; the good or evil of the world ; the licentiousness or renovation of manners ; the fall of saints or the conversion of sinners ; the weakness or energy of truth among men ; the dissension or peace of pastors and churches ; the disgraces or honours of individuals ;—in a word, all those eternal revolutions which the world offers continually to our view, and which only awaken earthly passions and carnal thoughts in worldly souls, are secret and continual instructions to a soul filled and animated with the Spirit of God. Every thing calls it back to the verities of faith : every thing discovers to it in a new light, the nothingness of human things, and the greatness

of eternal realities: the whole world is nothing but an open book, in which it continually beholds the wonders of God, and the prodigious blindness of almost all men.

SUBMISSION TO THE DIVINE WILL.

WHAT is the will of God? Is it any thing unjust, unworthy or dishonorable, any thing incommodious or hurtful, any thing extremely difficult or intolerably grievous, that God requireth of us, to do or to bear? No: he willeth nothing from us, or to us, which doth not best become us, and most behoove us; which is not attended with safety, with ease, with the solidest profit, the fairest reputation, and the sweetest pleasure.

Two things he willeth; that we should be good, and that we should be happy; the first in order to the second, for that virtue is the certain way, and a necessary qualification to felicity.

"The will of God," saith St. Paul, "is our sanctification." What is that? What, but the decays of our frame, and the defacement of God's image within us, should be repaired; that the faculties of our soul should be restored to their original integrity and vigour; that from most wretched slaveries we should be translated into a happy freedom, yea, into a glorious kingdom; that from despicable beggary and baseness we should be advanced to substantial wealth and sublime dignity; that we should be cleansed from the foulest defilements, and decked with the goodliest ornaments; that we should be cured of most loathsome diseases, and settled in a firm health of soul; that we should be delivered from those brutish lusts, and those devilish passions, which

create in us a hell of darkness, of confusion, of vexation—which dishonour our nature, deform our soul, ruffle our mind, and rack our conscience; that we should be endued with those worthy dispositions and affections, which do constitute in our hearts a heaven of light, of order, of joy, of peace—dignify our nature, beautify our soul, clarify and cheer our mind; that we should eschew those practices, which never go without a retinue of woful mischiefs and sorrows, embracing those which always yield abundant fruits of convenience and comfort; that, in short, we should become friends of God, fit to converse with angels, and capable of paradise?

“God,” saith St. Paul again, “willeth all men to be saved.” “He willeth not,” saith St. Peter, “that any man should perish.” He sayeth it himself, yea, he sweareth it, “that he hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn from his way and live.” And what is this will? What, but that we should obtain all the good whereof we are capable; that we should be filled with joy, and crowned with glory; that we should be fixed in an immovable state of happiness, in the perpetual enjoyment of God’s favour, and in the light of his blissful presence; that we should be rid of all the evils to which we are liable; that we should be released from inextricable chains of guilt, from incurable stings of remorse, from being irrecoverably engaged to pass a disconsolate eternity in utter darkness and extreme woe? Such is God’s will; to such purposes every command, every dispensation of God, (how grim, how rough soever it may seem,) doth tend. And do we refuse to comply with that good will? Do we set against it a will

of our own,—affecting things unworthy of us, things unprofitable to us, things prejudicial to our best interests, things utterly baneful to our souls? Do we reject the will that would save us, and adhere to a will that would ruin us; a foolish and senseless will, which, slighting the immense treasures of heaven, the unfading glories of God's kingdom, the ineffable joys of eternity, doth catch at spacious nothings, doth pursue mischievous trifles,—a shadow of base profit, a smoke of vain honour, a flash of sordid pleasure; which passeth away “like the mirth of fools,” or “the crackling of thorns,” leaving only soot, black and bitter, behind it? ●

But at least, ere we do this, let us consider whose will it is that requireth our compliance.

It is the will of Him, whose will did found the earth, and rear the heaven; whose will sustaineth all things in their existence and operation; whose will is the great law of the world, which universal nature in all its motions doth observe; which reigneth in heaven, the blessed spirits adoring it; which swayeth in hell itself, the cursed fiends trembling at it. And shall we alone, we pitiful worms crawling on earth, presume to murmur, or dare to kick against it?

It is the will of our Maker, who, together with all our other faculties, did create and confer on us the very power of willing; and shall we turn the work of his hands, the gift of his bounty, against him?

It is the will of our Preserver, who, together with all that we are, or have, continually doth uphold our very will itself: so that without employing any positive force, merely by letting us fall out of his hand, he can send us and it back

to nothing. And shall our will clash with that, on which it so wholly dependeth,—without which it cannot subsist for one moment, or move one step forward in action ?

It is the will of our sovereign Lord, who, upon various indisputable accounts, hath a just right to govern us, and an absolute power to dispose of us. Ought we not, therefore, to say with old Eli, “It is the Lord, let him do to me as it seems good to him ?” Is it not extreme iniquity, is it not monstrous arrogance for us, in derogation to his will, to pretend giving law, or picking a station to ourselves ? Do we not manifestly incur high treason against the King of heaven, by so invading his office, usurping his authority, snatching his sceptre into our hands, and setting our wills in his throne ?

It is the will of our Judge, from whose mouth our doom must proceed, awarding life or death, weal or woe, unto us ; and what sentence can we expect, what favour can we pretend to, if we presumptuously shall offend, oppose that will, which is the supreme rule of justice, and sole fountain of mercy ?

It is the will of our Redeemer, who has bought us with an inestimable price, and with infinite pains hath rescued us from miserable captivity under most barbarous enemies, that obeying his will, we might command our own, and serving him, we might enjoy perfect freedom. And shall we, declining his call and conduct out of that unhappy state, bereave him of his purchase, frustrate his undertakings, and forfeit to ourselves the benefit of so great redemption ?

It is the will of our best Friend, who loveth us much better than we do love ourselves ; who is

concerned for our welfare, as his own dearest interest, and greatly delighteth therein ; who, by innumerable experiments, hath demonstrated an excess of kindness to us, who, in all his dealings with us purely doth aim at our good, never charging any duty on us, or dispensing any event to us, so much with intent to exercise his power over us, as to express his goodness towards us ; who never doth afflict or grieve us more against our will, than against his own desire ; never indeed, but when goodness itself calleth for it, and even mercy doth urge thereto ; to whom we are much obliged, that he vouchsafeth to govern and guide us, our service being altogether unprofitable to him, his governance exceedingly beneficial to us. And doth not such a will deserve regard, may it not demand compliance from us ? To neglect or infringe it, what is it ? Is it not palpable folly, is it not foul disingenuity, is it not detestable ingratitude ?

So doth every relation of God recommend his will to us ; and each of his attributes doth no less ; for,

It is the will of Him, who is most holy, or whose will is essential rectitude : how then can we thwart it, without being stained with the guilt, and wounded with a sense of great irregularity and iniquity ?

It is the will of Him who is perfectly just ; who therefore cannot but assert his own righteous will, and avenge the violation thereof. Is it then advisable to drive him to that point by wilful provocation, or to run upon the edge of necessary severity ?

It is the will of Him who is infinitely wise ; who therefore doth infallibly know what is best

for us, what doth most benefit our capacities and circumstances, what in the final result will conduce to our greatest advantage and comfort. Shall we then prefer the dreams of our vain mind before the oracles of his wisdom ! Shall we, forsaking the direction of his unerring will, follow the impulse of our giddy humour ?

It is the will of Him, who is immensely good and benign ; whose will, therefore, can be no other than good-will to us ; who can mean nothing thereby but to confer bounty and mercy on us. Can we then fail of doing well, if we put ourselves entirely into his hands ! Are we not our own greatest enemies, in withstanding his gracious intentions !

It is, finally, the will of Him, who is uncontrollably powerful ; whose will must prevail one way or other ; either with our will or against it, either so as to bow and satisfy us, or so as to break and plague us ; for " my counsel," saith he, " shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." As to his dispensations, we may fret, we may wail, we may bark at them ; but we cannot alter or avoid them : sooner may we by our moans check the tides, or by our cries stop the sun in his career, than divert the current of affairs, or change the state of things established by God's high decree. What he layeth on, no hand can remove ; what he hath destined, no power can reverse ; our anger, therefore, will be ineffectual—our impatience will have no other fruit, than to aggravate our guilt, and augment our grief.

As to his commands, we may " lift up ourselves against him," we may fight stoutly. we may in a sort prove conquerors ; but it will be a miserable victory, the trophies whereof shall be

erected in hell, and stand upon the ruins of our happiness ; for, while we insult over abused grace, we must fall under incensed justice. If God cannot fairly procure his will of us in way of due obedience, he will surely execute his will upon us in way of righteous vengeance. If we do not surrender our wills to the overtures of his goodness, we must submit our backs to the strokes of his anger. He must reign over us, if not as over loyal subjects to our comfort, yet as over stubborn rebels to our confusion ; for this in that case will be our doom, and the last words God will deign to spend upon us, "Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring them together, and slay them before me."

DIVINE GRACE TRUE COMFORT.

A GRACIOUS woman, in deep affliction, was once heard to say, *I mourn, but I do not murmur.* We have read of one who, when informed that her two sons, her only children, were drowned, said, in all the majesty of grief, and with an heavenly composure: "I see God is resolved to have all my heart, and I am resolved *He shall have it.*"

FOLLY OF SELF-CONFIDENCE.

HOWSOEVER men, when they sit at ease, do vainly tickle their hearts with a vain conceit of I know not what proportionable correspondence between their merit and their rewards, which, in the trance of their high speculations, they dream that God hath measured, weighed and laid up, as

it were, in bundle for them ; notwithstanding, we see by daily experience, in a number even of them, that when the hour of death approacheth, when they secretly hear themselves summoned forth-with to appear, and stand at the bar of that Judge, whose brightness causeth the eyes of the angels themselves to dazzle, that these idle imaginations do then begin to hide their faces ; to name mérit then, is to lay their souls upon the rack ; the memory of their own deeds is loathsome unto them ; they forsake all things wherein they have put any trust or confidence ; no staff to lean upon, no ease, no rest, no comfort then, but only in Jesus Christ.

THE OBJECTION, THAT TOO MUCH RELIGION
IS HURTFUL TO SOCIETY, CONSIDERED.

It has been objected, that so much regard, or, as the objectors would call it, over-regard for religion, is inconsistent with the interest and welfare of our families, and with success and prosperity in our worldly affairs. I believe that there is very little ground for this objection in fact, and even, as the world goes, in reason and principle, there is none. A good Christian divides his time between the duties of religion, the calls of business, and those quiet relaxations which may be innocently allowed to his circumstances and condition, and which will be chiefly in his family, or amongst a few friends. In this plan of life, there is no confusion or interference of its parts ; and unless a man be given to sloth and laziness, which are what religion condemns, he will find time enough for them all. This calm system may not be sufficient for that unceasing eagerness, hurry,

and anxiety about worldly affairs, in which some men pass their lives ; but it is sufficient for every thing which reasonable prudence requires ; and it is perfectly consistent with usefulness in our stations, which is a main point. Indeed, compare the hours which serious persons spend in religious exercises and meditations, with the hours which the thoughtless and irreligious spend in idleness, and vice, and expensive diversions, and you will perceive on which side of the comparison the advantage lies, even in this view of the subject.

Nor is there any thing in the nature of religion to support the objection. In a certain sense it is true, what has been sometimes said, that religion ought to be the rule of life, not the business ; by which is meant, that the subject matter even of religious duties lies in the common affairs and transactions of the world. Diligence in our calling is an example of this ; which, however, keeps both a man's head and hands at work upon business merely temporal ; yet religion may be governing him here meanwhile. God may be feared in the busiest scene.

PRAYER.

WE are sometimes inclined to believe, that our prayers are not accepted by God, if we do not feel a certain degree of pleasure arising from the performance of this duty ; an enthusiasm of love towards the Divine Being arising in our souls. This is a wrong idea. Prayer is not a charm of the imagination, or a sweet delusion of the soul ; neither does it always produce the perceptible emotions of the grace of God in our hearts. It is

our bidden obedience to a divine command ; it is our self-humiliation before our Maker, the deprecation of his wrath, and the imploring his assistance against the temptations of sin. Let us, therefore, draw near with a pure heart, in full assurance of faith, making our petitions in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and relying on his merits alone for God's acceptance of them.

DUTY OF SECRET PRAYER.

LET me earnestly exhort all to be frequent in secret prayer. Be diligent in the practice of this duty, in obedience to the will and the authority of God. "Pray always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watch thereunto with all perseverance and supplications for all saints." Let the deep convictions of your secret sins, and secret wants, and secret temptations, urge you to go often to the throne of grace—not in the spirit of cold formality, but with the affection of a child to its parent—that you may obtain mercy to pardon, and find grace to help you. Say not that you have not time for the performance of this duty ; for however much engaged, you can easily and most profitably spend a few minutes in holding intercourse with the Father of your spirits, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though you were obliged to abstract these minutes from the time devoted to rest and sleep, the sacrifice thus made is nothing, and cannot injure either your health or your spirits ; while the privilege to be enjoyed is invaluable, and, when improved aright, will have an important influence on all your interests.

PROMISE OF GOD AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO PRAYER.

Our prayers should run parallel to God's promises; we should ask nothing of God but what we have an intimation he will do for us. Our needs and necessities would not be sufficient arguments; but the principal argument is the word of God. Finding a promise in the word, faith fixes there, and presseth God from it; and a believer so praying cannot be denied, unless God deny himself. The word of God is himself; it is his will: so the soul may go with a holy boldness unto God; for the thing that is promised is half done. God may keep us in suspense awhile; but he expects we should live upon the word, and hang on it till the time of the promise comes. All that faith labours for, is to work the soul to assurance that God will deal with us according to his word. And, if I can make it out that such a promise belongs to me, I have quite enough to live on.

DIVINE OMNISCIENCE AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO PRAYER.

Of the ancient sanctuary, the house of prayer, Jehovah condescended to say, "Mine eyes and my heart shall be there continually." More extended is the promise which encourages Christians to meet together for the purpose of social worship, since the Redeemer has given this most gracious assurance, "Where two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." But the encouragement arising from the divine omniscience extends beyond the sanctuary, even to the most secluded spot to

which a single individual may retire for the exercises of devotion. There may the humblest worshipper say to him who heareth prayer, "Thou, God, seest me." There, without presumption, may he seek an audience of Deity. Yes, and notwithstanding that thousands may, at the same moment, be offering up their petitions, he may cherish the delightful persuasion, that he shall as effectually engage the eye, and the ear, and the heart of the omniscient God, as though he were the only suppliant at the throne. Enter then Christian, with habitual delight and expectation into thy closet, and when thou has shut thy door, "pray to thy Father, who is in secret; and thy Father, who seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

NIGHT MEDITATION.

DAVID, surveying the firmament, brake forth into this consideration: "When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him?"

How cometh he to mention the moon and stars, and omit the sun? The other being but his pensioners, shining with that exhibition of light which the bounty of the sun allots them. It is answered, this was David's night meditation, when the sun, departing to the other world, left the lesser lights only visible in heaven; and as the sky is best beheld by day in the glory thereof, so it is best surveyed by night in its variety.

Night was made for man to rest in. But,

when I cannot sleep, may I, with this Psalmist, entertain my waking with good thoughts. Not to use them as opium, to invite my corrupt nature to slumber; but to shut out bad thoughts, which otherwise would possess my soul.

EXHORTATION.

LET us take care never to grieve the Holy Spirit of God that has been given to us; and for this purpose, never let us trust in ourselves. However evident our regeneration may be, we have always the enemies of our salvation in our bosoms. Our concupiscence is a lion which is sometimes humbled under grace, but which rises up against it on the first occasion, even so as to tear it in pieces, if we do not take peculiar care. Let us read the holy scriptures, be frequent in the exercises of devotion, and never grow weary of advancing in the knowledge of the mysteries of heaven; and let us repulse with zeal and indignation all the doubts which may arise against the truth of the gospel. Let us undauntedly regard all the afflictions which we must suffer for the sake of the Lord Jesus. If nature complains, let us check its complaints by recollecting our calling; if the flesh murmurs, let us impose silence upon it, by arguing the honour of suffering for so glorious a cause. Let us be shaken by nothing; neither death, nor life; nor angels, nor men; nor humiliations, nor exaltations; nor fear, nor hope; nor the love of ourselves, nor the love of our children, more tender than ourselves. Let us keep the faith; let us fight the good fight; and let us beware that, in the midst of our race, we

do not lose the prize which is proposed to us. Let us practise the works of sanctification; let us live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. While we are looking for the happy day, and glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us remember that we have been sealed unto that great day of our redemption. Let us live in the enjoyment of the honour of this seal, until at length God puts us into the enjoyment of the promise which it secures to us. Let us not fear death, since its darkness will be succeeded by so glorious a light, and its night by so bright a day. Let this monster swallow us up, when God pleases, we are confident that he must cast us on shore, and that all his power must yield to that of our deliverer. He will descend from heaven to seek the flesh which he has redeemed; and, after raising it from the tomb, he will exalt it to the abode of his Spirit. For then the Spirit will no more visit the earth to associate himself with the infirmities of the flesh; but the flesh will follow the Spirit into the eternal paradise, and its meanness will be happily lost in the glory of that Spirit, who shall ever continue to be, not the seal of our redemption, but the source of our felicity.

TIME.

TIME, like a long flowing stream, makes haste into eternity, and is for ever lost and swallowed up there; and while it is hastening to its period, it sweeps away all things with it which are not immortal. There is a limit appointed by Providence to the duration of all the pleasant and de-

sirable scenes of life, to all the works of the hands of men, with all the glories and excellencies of animal nature, and all that is made of flesh and blood. Let us not dote upon any thing here below, for heaven hath inscribed vanity upon it. The moment is hastening when the decree of heaven shall be uttered, and Providence shall pronounce upon every glory of the earth, "Its time shall be no longer."

DEATH.

DEATH is, in itself, a most serious and distressful event. It is nature's supreme evil—the abhorrence of God's creation—a monster from whose touch every living thing recoils. So that to shrink from its ravages upon ourselves or upon those whom we love, is not an argument of weakness, but an act of obedience to the first law of being—a tribute to the value of that life which is our Maker's gift.

The disregard which some of old affected to whatever goes by the name of evil; the insensibility of others who yield up their souls to the power of fatalism; and the artificial gaiety which has occasionally played the comedian about the dying bed of "philosophy falsely so called," are outrages upon decency and nature. Death destroys both action and enjoyment—mocks at wisdom, strength, and beauty—disarranges our plans—robs us of our treasure—desolates our bosoms—breaks our heart-strings—blasts our hope. Death extinguishes the glow of kindness—abolishes the most tender relations of man—severs him from all that he knows and loves—subjects

him to an ordeal which thousands of millions have passed, but none can explain; and which will be as new to the last who gives up the ghost, as it was to murdered Abel—flings him, in fine, without an avail from the experience of others, into a state of untried being. No wonder that nature trembles before it. Reason justifies the fear. Religion never makes light of it; and he who does, instead of ranking with heroes, can hardly deserve to rank with a brute.

THE MISERY OF A DYING INFIDEL.

———To his anguish no end appears. Of such an end no arguments can be furnished by his mind, no tidings have reached his ear; and no hopes can rationally arise in his heart. Death, with all the gloomy scenes attendant upon a dying bed, is to him merely the commencement of doubt, fear, and sorrow. The grave, to him, is the entrance into a world of absolute and eternal darkness. That world, hung round with fear, amazement, and despair, overcast with midnight, melancholy with solitude, desolate of every hope of real good, opens to him through the dreary passage of the grave. Beyond this entrance he sees nothing, he knows nothing, he can conjecture nothing, but what must fill his heart with alarm, and make his death-bed a couch of thorns. With a suspense, scarcely less terrible than the miseries of damnation itself, his soul lingers over the vast and desolate abyss; when, compelled by an unseen and irresistible hand, it plunges into this uncertain and irreversible doom, to learn by

experience what is the measure of woe, destined to reward those who "obey not God," and reject the salvation proffered by his Son.

FRAILITY OF MAN.

I HAVE seen a rose newly springing from the clefts of its hood; and at first it was fair as the morning, and full with the dew of heaven, as a lamb's fleece. But when a rude breath had forced open its virgin modesty, and dismantled its too youthful and unripe retirement, it began to put on darkness, and to decline to softness, and the symptoms of a sickly age: it bowed the head, and broke its stalk, and at night, having lost some of its leaves, and all its beauty, it fell into the portion of weeds and worn-out faces. The same is the portion of every man and every woman: the heritage of worms and serpents, rottenness and cold dishonour, and our beauty so changed, that our acquaintance knows us not; and that change mingled with so much horror, or else meets so with our fears and weak discouragements, that they who six hours ago tended upon us, either with charitable or ambitious services, cannot, without some regret, stay in the room alone where the body lies stript of its life and honours.

There is indeed a great deal of seeming difference betwixt the outward condition of life amongst men. Shall the rich, and honourable, and beautiful, and healthful, go in together, under the same name, with the baser and unhappier part—the poor, wretched sort of the world, that seem to be born for nothing but sufferings and

miseries? at least, hath the wise no advantage beyond fools? is all grass? make you no distinction? No; all is grass; or, if you will have some other name, be it so, since this is true, that all flesh is grass; and if that glory that shines so much in your eyes must have a difference, then this is all it can have—it is but the flower of that same grass, somewhat above the common grass in gayness, a little comelier, and better apparelled than it, but partaker of its frail and fading nature; hath no privilege nor immunity that way; yea, of the two, the less durable, and usually short-lived; at the best, it decays with it, “the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away.”

He who, in one respect, is associated with angels and archangels, who may look upon a Being of infinite perfection as his Father, and the highest order of spirits as his brethren, may, in another sense, say to corruption, “Thou art my father, and to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister.”

How often is the life of man, even in its fairest and loveliest, its most splendid, most admired, and most flattering appearances, suddenly and prematurely cut down, like the expanding flower of the morning, in all its vigorous freshness, and all its glittering pride and beauty, falling before the scythe.

HOW TO DIE LIKE SAINTS.

If you would have your portion with the saints in your death, you must resolve to spend your lives with them, and to become, while you are in this world, faithful to the Spirit, and to the hope which is given them, accounting it your greatest distinction among men, "that ye are called to be saints," and that ye are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, by means of which ye have in any degree obtained that high character. You must live the life of the righteous, if you would wish your last end to be like his.

Hear this admonition while it can avail you. This day is salvation sounded in your ears, if ye are not determined to be for ever associated with them, who, far from being saints, give themselves up to the perdition of ungodly men, and reject the counsel of God against themselves. They that are far from God shall perish. But blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. In their graves is the place of rest. Them who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him; and they shall reign with him for ever and ever.

History sheweth the weak and contemptible efficacy of the sublimest philosophy of the heathens, when it is encountered with inveterate corruptions, or violent temptations; how many of them that spake of virtue like angels, yet lived in a manner like brutes: whereas in all ages, poor Christian plebeians, unpolished by learning, but earnest in prayer, and depending upon grace, have, in comparison of these others, lived rather like angels than men; and shown such an invincible steadfastness in the practice of virtue, as

shameth all the philosophy in the world. Many of these ancient philosophers, who reasoned admirably in favour of virtue, and particularly of truth, honesty, and sincerity, are believed to have maintained one eternal Deity in private, and yet most disingenuously complied with the abominable idolatry of the multitude in public; while those who depended on the grace of Jesus Christ, showed an integrity in their zeal for the one true God, which death and tortures could not overcome; they forced their way through all the cruelties that malice could inflict, till they spread the knowledge of the true God and his laws through the known world: whereas, for all the speculations of the philosophers, the world might have been lying as it was to this day.

Religion prepares us for all events. If we succeed—it keeps our prosperity from destroying us: if we suffer—it preserves us from fainting in the day of adversity. It turns our losses into gains; it exalts our joy into praises; it makes prayers of our sighs—and in all the uncertainties of time, and changes of the world, it sheds on the mind a “peace which passeth all understanding.” It unites us to each other—not only as creatures, but as Christians; not only as strangers and pilgrims upon earth, but as heirs of glory, honour, and immortality.—For you must separate—it is useless to keep back the mortifying truth.—It was the condition upon which your union was formed. O man! it was a mortal finger upon which you placed the ring, that vain emblem of perpetuity. O woman! it was a dying hand that imposed it. After so many mutual and growing attachments, to separate!—What is to

be done here? O Religion, Religion, come and relieve us in a case where every other assistance fails. Come and teach us not to wrap up our chief happiness in the creature. Come and bend our wills to the pleasure of the Almighty. Come and enable us to say, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth him good; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord." Come and tell us that they are disposed of infinitely to their advantage; that the separation is temporary; that a time of reunion will come; that we shall see their faces, and hear their voices again.—

Take two Christians who have been walking together like "Zechariah and Elizabeth in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." Is the connexion dissolved by death? No. We take the Bible along with us, and inscribe on their tomb, "Pleasant in life and in death not divided." Is the one removed before the other? He becomes an attraction to the other; he draws him forward, and is waiting to "receive him into everlasting habitations."—Let us suppose a pious family reuniting together, after following each other successively down to the grave. How unlike every present meeting! Here our intercourse is chilled with the certainty of separation. There we shall meet to part no more; we shall be for ever with each other, and for ever with the Lord. Now affliction often enters our circle, and the distress of one is the concern of all. Then we shall "rejoice with them that rejoice," but not "weep with them that weep," for "all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, and the days of our mourning shall be ended."

Come then, my dear friends, and invite the re-

ligion of the blessed Jesus—this one thing needful—this universal benefactor of mankind. It has “the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come”—It secures our individual and our relative happiness—It brings peace into our bosoms, and joy into our dwellings. Let us resolve to pursue it ourselves; let us enforce it upon our connexions. Let us dedicate our tabernacles to God; offer the morning and evening sacrifice of prayer and of praise: and whatever be the determination of others, let us say for ourselves, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

DEATH THE PATH TO GLORY.

DEATH to a good man is but passing through a dark entry, out of one little dusky room of his father's house, into another that is fair and large, lightsome and glorious, and divinely entertaining. O may the rays and splendours of my heavenly apartment shoot far downward, and gild the dark entry with such a cheerful gleam, as to banish every fear when I shall be called to pass through!

HEAVEN OPENED.

THE curtain which overspread the invisible world is at length drawn aside, and we behold our great High Priest entered “into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” We hear the songs of the redeemed, expressive of their gratitude to Him who loved them, and washed them from their sins, in his own blood,

and hath made them kings and priests to God. We see our friends in Jesus from time to time forming the blessed assembly. We hear the voice of *their* Saviour, and *our* Saviour, encouraging us "not to sorrow as others who have no hope," informing us, that the resurrection of Christ, attested as it is by the most infallible proofs, is not more certain, than the resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. We are assured, that the sickness which has deprived us of the society of our beloved Christian friends, is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby; that believers, when absent from the body, are present with the Lord; that when committing their remains to the dust, we are sowing the seed of a glorious harvest, and that our sorrow shall ere long be turned into joy. Such is the "strong consolation" under all the sorrows of life, which God has given to those "who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before them." "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." To believers it shall be a morning without clouds; for "the Lord shall be their everlasting light; and the days of their mourning shall be ended."

A PICTURE OF A WORLDLY-MINDED OLD AGE

Of all obstructions to a religious spirit, worldly-mindedness is the most inveterate. Every day of his life who is under its reigning control, taketh hold on its brother's heel; and they are twins in their undivided pursuits. Night unto night teacheth knowledge, but not of God. Time,

enjoyment, worldly homage, enforce the soul into one full channel, and the sluices towards heaven are left dry. And of all habits this is the meanest and most unworthy of man's immortal lights. How undignified the old age of such a man ! The old hills are renewed with verdure. Even the lava-courses are hid in time beneath vineyards. The dismantled tower of ages gains in veneration what it loses by literal decay. The pious old man bears on the venerable tablet of his forehead shadowed glimpses of the coming heaven. The old worldling—alas ! it is he ; of him is the contrast. There is no redeeming symbol or circumstance in his old age : The eye of cunning still at its post almost outliving decay : The old hand almost conquering by its unabated eagerness the palsy of years—trembling in both ; still closing over gain ; mocking, in the stiffness of its muscles, the being's protracted delight to count over so much money his own, or sorrow to give so much away.

If we follow him still—there is something more imposing in that dead face of his, than if it bore the tread of majestic armies going out to conquer for him a kingdom and wealth beyond that of the famed Lydian king. It belongs to Eternity, and worlds could not re-purchase it to live. His worldly hand hath gained an involuntary majesty : it belongs to the resurrection day : it hath taken the earnest of futurity, and closed solemnly over it.

We have passed an intermediate stage, the approach and advent of death ;—the day of God's Spirit, mighty in extremity, tearing up old habits of the mind ;—or as a probable issue of a worldly life, and worthy of its tenor, the doomed being

waiting the event with apathy ; or eager to have his affairs of life wound up ; or gladly conscious of no gross immoralities ; or touched with just so much conviction of his by-past folly, that he will make a virtue of necessity, and bequeath money to found a church or hospital (and the solemn mockery of this state of mind shall be a charitable fame and a marble cherub to weep upon his monument.) Or still an undying love of Mammon may be with his heart till the last, a retching of the soul toward the ebbing world, not unfitly represented by the fearful symbol of the natural hand clutching for life.

THE WEAKNESS AND EVILS OF INDECISION.

IN whatever process the power of attention is not strengthened, or is positively weakened, our religion is left without, or is deprived of a natural strength. When, in the lessons of truth, conviction is left unaddressed, whilst the understanding only is informed, conscience becomes more distinct from intellect ; and, wanting this active and associated impulse, its perceptions are not so often excited, and its sway over the mind is less wide and powerful. In our early comparisons, unless the estimated worth be carefully stripped of its adventitious claims, that address themselves to our prejudices, and the mind trained to this work of an exclusionist, our moral judgment will go wrong and reason absolutely, when allowance should be made for circumstances. These results make up one part of the weakness which we term indecision ;—a speculative admission of the truth, but the imperative obliga-

tion not felt of following its dictates;—conviction without a due proportion of strength;—a prepossession in favour of present inclination, that in reasoning will not follow an argument whithersoever it may lead;—that, in the necessity of labour in the business of life, will rather indulge in present ease, than be diligent in providing for the future;—that in a king will bind him to a complaisant favourite, rather than admit the wisdom of an austere but prudent counsellor;—that in the interests of eternity cannot resolve instantly to pursue them, and do justice to a moral obligation, in the face of the present. In all this, it will be observed, there is a great want of self-respect, that a man will not allow his spirit to rule his conduct. The same self-disregard is mightily increased, as the power of practical conviction is weakened still more, and the character of indecision completed, in a farther stage of the same bad education. If conviction be addressed in behalf of duty, but the beginnings of the duty not enforced, the above result is obvious, that the one must be judged impertinent, and the other instantly despised. If permitted to be careless in the first acts, besides losing strength for farther and better performance, the spirit hath already judged it a matter of indifference; and a habit of unsteadiness is begun, where perseverance is of the utmost moment.

Thus becomes strongly marked this characteristic of a weak mind, or rather the very weakness itself;—unhappy in all things;—never victorious; and wanting consolation for defeat in the reversion of self-respect and the proud consciousness of having done our part manfully;—in all things unworthy of our higher nature,—of

man, "a creature of large discourse, looking before and after;" and very fatal to all our interests, particularly those of our futurity. Shame to the man who can help himself by reflection! Woe to the man whose disabilities are inveterate! Infatuation in the one, and more immediate ruin in the other! That they know the commandment but do it not;—that their reason grants the importance of religious duty above all things, but that they cannot begin or persevere to fulfil it.

THE RESURRECTION ACCOMPLISHED BY THE POWER OF CHRIST.

THE resurrection of the body will be accomplished by the power of Christ. "I will raise him up at the last day." He that has given the promise of a resurrection to eternal life to all that believe on his name, pledges himself for its accomplishment. "He will change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working, whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself;"—that mighty working, whereby, in the beginning, he collected, arranged, and combined into one fair, harmonious, and stupendous system, the myriads of atoms of which the material universe is composed. *How* he will do it, is a question that never troubles me. The assurance that he *will*, is a sufficient ground on which to rest my confidence. If, indeed, I had never seen the loveliness and fertility of spring burst from the coldness and torpidity of winter;—if I had never seen the ripened harvest waving in the wind, from the grains of corn that were commit-

ted to the ground, and perished in the soil ;—if I had never witnessed the power of the magnet, that collects the particles of steel from the midst of other matter with which they may have been mingled ;—if I had never “ considered the heavens, the work of his fingers,” those suns, the centres of other systems, in magnitude and beauty far surpassing ours, rolling in the immensity of space around me, all brought into existence by the fiat of his omnipotence ;—if I had never contemplated the curious structure of my own frame, so fearfully and wonderfully made in the deep retirements of nature, and inspired by His breath with a living soul and an intelligent mind ;—if, in short, I had any doubt as to the divinity of Christ, or the being of a God—I might anticipate with fearful apprehension the day of death, and look with trembling anxiety for the promised resurrection morn ; but, as it is, “ I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth,” to raise and remodel the dust of all that sleep in him. Nor can he who built the body at first, be at any loss for power and skill to bring it again from the darkness of the sepulchre, and rebuild it, in loveliness and beauty, from the ruins of the grave.

CHRIST THE GUARDIAN OF HIS PEOPLE'S
DUST.

At the resurrection, *the soul will be reunited to the body.* Then the ravages of mortality will cease—the triumphs of death will terminate, and the grave will be compelled to lay down the

proudest of its trophies at the feet of Jesus. Through how many ages has the spirit of the martyred Abel "waited for the salvation, to wit, the redemption of his body"—waited, not with trembling anxiety, much less with hopeless despair, yet conscious that the felicity of heaven cannot be complete, till both body and soul have their perfect consummation and bliss in the kingdom of God. But the ashes of the saints are the Redeemer's charge. His eye is on their sleeping dust; and, whether borne by the winds of heaven to the remoteness of the untrodden desert, or the summit of the inaccessible rock; whether deeply buried in the abysses of the ocean, or reposing amid the teeming population of the crowded city:—not a solitary particle, essential to the identity of the meanest of his followers, shall be lost. Every body shall be built again, and receive its own appropriate tenant to an eternal residence, never more to be made weary of its habitation by reason of disease, or ejected by the stroke of death.

THE HEAVENLY BANQUET.

ALL things are progressive here, but they are not perpetual,—they could not be otherwise advancing to perfection. Our Sabbaths return in their season, and remain only for a season. Our ministers, like the messengers from heaven in former days, the angels who were sent to the patriarchs, deliver their message, and disappear. Many gather round the grave of one, and take up the lamentation, "Alas, my brother!" or exclaim, "My father! my father! the chariot of

Israel, and the horsemen thereof!" And his offices are performed, his pulpit is filled by another. So we pass away in succession. The table spread here is continually shifting its guests; but it is not so with the banquet of eternity.

It is heaven;—for *there* the guests are uniform. *Here* they are gathered from all nations—they sit at different tables—call themselves by different names—speak a different tongue—range under a different party—and are sometimes scarcely in charity with each other. But *there*, collected from all quarters of the world, they appear in one dress—they are called by one name—they meet in one place—they participate one salvation—they are “of one heart, and of one mind.” *Here*, they differ in talents; and even *there*, they shall probably differ in glory; but the glory of each shall be perfect in itself; and every happy spirit shall possess as much as it can enjoy—shall contain a felicity overflowing all, according to the capacity of each. So that, while they differ in glory, they are alike and equal in enjoyment, each possessing as much as it can grasp. “There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.” No tulip-bed exhibits a richer assemblage of colours than the heavenly bodies, when seen through telescopes of the first order; yet this variety, while each has its own splendour, and is perfect in its kind, adds to the grandeur and beauty of the whole scene. If, then, the feast intends the dispensation of the gospel generally, it must refer to heaven, where the whole is complete, particularly. Are you desirous of sharing these eternal benefits? What shall hinder you? Approach;—for “yet there is room.”

SUBJECTS OF HEAVENLY MEDITATION.

WHAT inexhaustible sources are there here for the entertainment of the blessed !—God manifest in the flesh !—The Creator of the world expiring on a cross !—Guilt, complicated guilt, expiated !—Innocence retrieved !—Justice satisfied, yet mercy triumphant !—Death swallowed up in victory !—The powers of darkness routed and overthrown !—The miserable vassals of Satan made heirs of God !—Humanity united to Deity !—Angels confirmed in their bliss !—And the happiness of every individual, of that vast and boundless empire, infinitely augmented by the astonishing display of wisdom, power, and love.

DEPARTMENT TOWARDS OTHERS.

JUSTICE is due to the feelings of others ; and this applies to many circumstances which do not affect either their interest or their reputation. Without injuring them in any of these respects, or in our own good opinion, we may behave to them in such a manner as to wound their feelings. There are minds of an extreme delicacy, which, in this respect, are peculiarly sensitive ; towards such, a person of correct feelings strives to conduct himself with suitable tenderness. We may find, however, persons of honest and upright minds, who would shrink from the least approach to real injury, but yet neglect the necessary attention to the feelings ; and may even confer a real benefit in such a manner as to wound the individual to whom they intended kindness. The

lower degrees of this principle pertain to what is called mere good-breeding, which has been defined "benevolence in trifles;" but the higher degrees may restrain from conduct which, without any real injury, inflicts permanent pain. To this head we may perhaps also refer a due regard to the estimate which we lead a man to form of himself. This is opposed to flattery on the one hand, and on the other to any unnecessary depreciation of his character. Flattery indeed is also to be considered as a violation of veracity.

There is another class of injuries, of still higher magnitude, which the conscientious mind will avoid with peculiar anxiety, namely, injuries done to the moral principles of other men. These form a class of offences of which no human law takes any adequate cognizance; but we know that they possess a character of the deepest malignity. Deep guilt attaches to the man who, by persuasion or ridicule, has unhinged the moral feelings of another, or has been the means of leading him astray from the paths of virtue. Of equal or even greater malignity is the aspect of the writer whose works have contributed to violate the principles of truth and rectitude,—to pollute the imagination, or corrupt the heart. Inferior offenders are promptly seized by public authority, and suffer the award of public justice; but the destroyer of the moral being often walks securely through his own scene of moral discipline, as if no power could reach the measure of his guilt but the hand of the Eternal.

THE DOMESTIC AFFECTIONS.

Among the feelings of our nature "which have less of earth in them than heaven," are those which bind together the domestic circle in the various sympathies, affections, and duties which belong to this class of tender relations. It is beautiful also to observe how these affections arise out of each other, and how the right exercise of them tends to their mutual cultivation. The father ought to consider the son as, of all earthly concerns, the highest object of his anxious care; and should watch over the development of his intellectual character, and the culture of his moral feelings. In the zealous prosecution of this great purpose, he should study to convey a clear impression that he is influenced purely by a feeling of solemn responsibility, and an anxious desire to promote the highest interests. When paternal watchfulness is thus mingled with confidence and kindness, the son will naturally learn to estimate alike the conduct itself and the principles from which it sprang, and will look to the faithful parent as his safest guide and counsellor, and most valued earthly friend. If we extend the same principles to the relation between the mother and the daughter, they apply with equal, or even greater force. In the arrangements of society, these are thrown more constantly into each other's company; and that watchful superintendence may be still more habitually exercised, which, along with the great concern of cultivating the intellectual and moral being, neglects not those graces and delicacies which belong peculiarly to the female character. It is not by direct instruction alone that, in such

a domestic circle, the highest principles and best feelings of our nature are cultivated in the minds of the young. It is by the actual exhibition of the principles themselves, and an uniform recognition of their supreme importance; it is by a parental conduct, steadily manifesting the conviction, that, with every proper attention to their acquirements, accomplishments, and the comforts of life, the chief concern of moral beings relates to the life which is to come. A domestic society bound together by these principles can retire, as it were, from the haunts of men, and retreat within a sanctuary where the storms of the world cannot enter. When thus met together in the interchange of mutual affection and mutual confidence, they present the anticipation of that period when, after the tumults of life are over, they shall meet again, "no wanderer lost, a family in heaven."

DEFINITIONS OF HEAVEN AND HELL.

DIVINE wisdom has so ordered the frame of the whole universe, that every thing should have a certain proper place, a fit receptacle for it. Hell is the sink of all sin and wickedness. The strong magic of nature pulls and draws every thing, continually, to that place which is suitable to it, and to which it belongs. So, all heavy bodies press downward toward the centre of our earth, drawn in by its attraction. In like manner, hell, where-soever it is, will, by strong sympathy, pull in all sin and magnetically draw it to itself. While true holiness is always breathing upward, and fluttering toward heaven, striving to embosom

itself with God: and it will, at last, undoubtedly be conjoined with him; no dismal shades of darkness can possibly stop it in its course, or bear it back. Nay, we do but deceive ourselves with names. Hell is nothing but the orb of sin and wickedness, that hemisphere of darkness in which all evil moves; and heaven is the opposite hemisphere of light, the bright orb of truth, holiness, and goodness. And, in this life, we actually instate ourselves in the possession of one or other of them. Take sin and disobedience out of hell, and it will presently clear up into light, tranquillity, and serenity, and shine out into a heaven. Every true saint carries his heaven about with him, in his own heart; and hell, that is without, can have no power over him. He might safely wade through hell itself, and, like the three children, pass through the midst of that fiery furnace, and yet not at all be scorched with its flames, He might walk through the valley of the shadow of death, and yet fear no evil.

I wish it may not prove some of our cases, at the last day, to use such pleas as these unto Christ in our behalf; 'Lord, I have prophesied in thy name: I have preached many a zealous sermon for thee; I have kept many a long fast; I have been very active for thy cause in church, in state; nay, I never made any question, but that my name was written in the book of life:'—when yet, alas! we shall receive no other return from Christ but this: 'I know you not; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.'

TRUTH.

'THE first creature of God, in the works of the days, was the light of the sense; the last was the light of reason; and his Sabbath work, ever since, is the illumination of his spirit. First he breathed light upon the face of the matter, or chaos; then he breathed light into the face of man; and still he breatheth and inspireth light into the face of his chosen. Lucretius, who beautified the sect, that was otherwise inferior to the rest, saith yet excellently well, "It is a pleasure to stand upon the shore, and see ships tossed upon the sea: a pleasure to stand in the window of a castle, and to see a battle, and the adventures thereof below: but no pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of truth, (a hill not to be commanded, and where the air is always clear and serene,) and to see the errors, and wanderings, and mists, and tempests, in the vale below:" so always that this prospect be with pity, and not with swelling or pride. Certainly, it is heaven upon earth to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth.'

TRUE HAPPINESS.

GRACE is holiness militant; holiness, encumbered with many enemies and difficulties, which it ever fights against, and manfully acquits itself. And glory is nothing else but holiness triumphant; holiness, with a palm of victory in her hand, and a crown upon her head. God himself cannot make me happy, if he be only without me, and unless he vouchsafe a participation of him-

self and his own likeness, into my soul.' Happiness is nothing but the releasing and unfettering of our souls from all narrow scant, and particular good things: and the espousing of them to the highest and most universal good, which is not this or that particular good, but goodness itself: and this is the same thing, which we call holiness. With which, because we ourselves are so little acquainted—for the most part ever courting its mere shadow—therefore, we have such low, abject, and beggarly conceits of it; whereas, it is, in itself, the most noble, heroical, and generous thing in the world. For I mean by holiness, nothing else but God stamped and printed on the soul. And we may please ourselves with what conceits we will; but, so long as we are void of this, we do but dream of heaven, and I know not what fond paradise; we do but blow up and down an airy bubble of our own fancies, which raises out of the froth of our vain hearts; we do but court a painted heaven and woo happiness in a picture, whilst, in the mean time, a true and real hell will absorb our souls into it, and will soon make us sensible of solid woe and substantial misery.

WHAT MAY BE KNOWN ONLY BY EXPERIENCE.

INK and paper can never make us Christians; can never beget a new nature, a living principle in us; can never form Christ, or any true notions of spiritual things, in our hearts. The Gospel, that new law which CHRIST delivered to the world, is not merely a dead letter without us, but a quickening spirit within us. Cold

theorems and maxims, dry and jejune disputes, lean syllogistical reasonings, could never yet, of themselves, beget the least glimpses of true heavenly light, the least sap of saving knowledge, in any heart. All this is but the groping of the poor dark spirit of man after truth; to find it out with his own endeavours, and feel it with his own cold and benumbed hands. Words and syllables, which are but dead things, cannot possibly convey the living notions of heavenly truth to us. The secret mysteries of divine life, of a new nature, of Christ formed in our hearts, cannot be written or spoken; language and expressions cannot reach them: neither can they be truly understood, except the soul itself be kindled from within, and awakened into the life which animates them. A painter that would draw a rose, though he may flourish some likeness of it in figure and colour, can yet never paint the scent and fragrantcy; or, if he would draw a flame, he cannot put a constant heat into his colours; he cannot make his pencil drop a sound, as the echo in the epigram mocks at him. All the skill of cunning artisans and mechanics, cannot put a principle of life into a statue of their own making. Neither are we able to inclose in words and letters, the life, soul, and essence, of any spiritual truths, and, as it were, to incorporate it in them.

A GREAT DEAL DONE TO NO GOOD EFFECT.

INDEED, we seem to do something: we are always moving and lifting at the stone of corruption which lies upon our hearts, but yet we never stir it, or at least never roll it off from us. We are sometimes a little troubled with the guilt of

our sins, and then, we think we must thrust our desires out of our hearts; but afterward, we sprinkle ourselves over with I know not what holy water, and so, are contented to let those desires still abide quietly within us. We every day truly confess the same sins, and pray against them; and yet, we still commit them as much as ever, and lie as deeply under the power of them. We have the same water to pump out, in every prayer; and still we let the same leak in again upon us. We make a great deal of noise, and raise a great deal of dust with our feet; but we do not move from off the ground on which we stood, we do not at all go forward. Or, if we do sometimes make a little progress, we quickly lose again the ground which we had gained; like those upper planets in the heaven, which, as the astronomers tell us, sometimes move forward, sometimes quite backward, and sometimes perfectly stand still; have their stations and retrogradations, as well as their direct motions. As if religion were nothing else but a dancing up and down upon the same piece of ground, and making several motions and friskings on it; and not a sober journeying, and travelling onward toward some certain place. We do and undo: we weave sometimes a web of holiness, but then we let our passions come and undo and unravel all again. Like Sisyphus in the fable, we roll up a mighty stone, with much ado, sweating and tugging, up the hill; and then we let it go, and tumble down again unto the bottom; and this is our constant work. Like those Danaides, whom the poets speak of, we are always, by our prayers, duties, and performances, filling water into a sieve, which still runs out as fast as we pour it in.

PERSEVERANCE.

There are few difficulties that hold out against real attacks; they fly, like the visible horizon, before those who advance. A passionate desire and an unwearied will can perform impossibilities, or what seem to be such, to the cold and the feeble. *If we do but go on, some unseen path will open among the hills.* We must not allow ourselves to be discouraged by the apparent disproportion between the result of single efforts and the magnitude of the obstacles to be encountered. Nothing good nor great is to be obtained without courage and industry; *but courage and industry must have sunk in despair, and the world must have remained unornamented and unimproved, if men had nicely compared the effect of a single stroke of the chisel with the pyramid to be raised, or of a single impression of the spade with the mountain to be levelled.* All exertion, too, is in itself delightful, and active amusements seldom tire us. Helvetius owns that he could hardly listen to a concert for two hours, though he could play on an instrument all day long. The chase, we know, has always been the favourite amusement of kings and nobles. Not only fame and fortune, but pleasure is to be earned. Efforts, it must not be forgotten, are as indispensable as desires. The globe is not to be circumnavigated by one wind. We should never do nothing. 'It is better to wear out than to rust out,' says Bishop Cumberland. '*There will be time enough for repose in the grave,*' said Nicole to Pascal.

As a young man, you should be mindful of the unspeakable importance of early industry,

since in youth habits are easily formed, and there is time to recover from ill defeats. *An Italian sonnet justly, as well as elegantly, compares procrastination to the folly of a traveller who pursues a brook till it widens into a river and is lost in the sea.* The toils as well as risks of an active life are commonly overrated, so much may be done by the diligent use of ordinary opportunities; but they must not always be waited for, We must not only strike the iron while it is hot, but strike till 'it is made hot.' Herschel, the great astronomer, declares that ninety or one hundred hours, clear enough for observations, cannot be called an unproductive year.

The lazy, the dissipated, and the fearful should patiently see the active and the bold pass them in the course. They must bring down their pretensions to the level of their talents. Those who have not energy to work must learn to be humble, and should not vainly hope to unite the incompatible enjoyments of indolence and enterprise, of ambition and self-indulgence.

NOTHING HARMS US BUT OUR OWN WILLS.

THERE is nothing in the whole world able to do us good or hurt, but God, and our own will: neither riches nor poverty, nor disgrace nor honour, nor life nor death, nor angels nor devils; but willing or not willing as we ought. Should hell itself cast all its fiery darts against us, if our will be right, if it be informed by the divine will, they can do us no hurt; we have then, if I may so speak, an enchanted shield, that is impenetrable, and will bear off all. God will not hurt us, and

hell cannot hurt us, if we will nothing but what God wills. Nay, then we are actuated by God himself, and the whole divinity flows in upon us; and, when we have cashiered this self-will of ours, which did but schackle and confine our souls, our wills shall then become truly free, being widened and enlarged to the extent of God's own will, 'Hereby we know, that we know CHRIST indeed,' not by our speculative opinions concerning him, but 'by our keeping of his commandments.'

ADVERSITY.

'It was a high speech of Seneca, (after the manner of the Stoics,) that "the good things which belong to prosperity are to be wished, but the good things belonging to adversity are to be admired:" *Bona rerum secundarum optabilia, adversarum mirabilia.*" Certainly if miracles be the command over nature, they appear most in adversity. It is yet a higher speech of his than the other, (much too high for a heathen,) "It is true greatness to have in one the frailty of a man, and the security of a God:" *Verè magnum, habere fragilitatem hominis, securitatem Dei.*" This would have done better in poesy, where transcendencies are more allowed; and the poets, indeed, have been busy with it; for it is in effect the thing which is figured in that strange fiction of the ancient poets, which seemeth not to be without mystery, nay, and to have some approach to the state of a Christian, "that Hercules, when he went to unbind Prometheus," by whom human nature is represented, "sailed the length of the great ocean in an earthen pot or pitcher," lively describing Christian resolution, that saileth

in the frail bark of the flesh through the waves of the world. But to speak in a mean : the virtue of prosperity is temperance ; the virtue of adversity is fortitude ; which in morals is the more heroical virtue. Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament : adversity is the blessing of the New, which carrieth the greater benediction and the clearer revelation of God's favour. Yet even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp, you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols ; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath laboured more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon. Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes : and adversity is not without comforts and hopes. We see in needle-works and embroideries it is more pleasing to have a lively work upon a sad and solemn ground, than to have a dark and melancholy work upon a lightsome ground : judge therefore of the pleasure of the heart by the pleasure of the eye. Certainly virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed ; for prosperity doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best discover virtue.'

OF PRAYER.

Our prayers should run parallel to promises ; we should ask nothing of God but what we have an intimation he will do for us : our needs and necessities would not be sufficient argument ; but the principal argument is the word of God. Finding a promise in the word, faith fixes there, and presseth God from it ; and a believer so praying cannot be denied, unless God deny himself. The

word of God is himself; it is his will: so the soul may go with a holy boldness unto God; for the thing that is promised is half done. God may keep us in suspense a while; but he expects we should live upon the word, and hang on it till the time of the promise comes. All that faith labours for is to work the soul to assurance that God will deal with us according to his word. And if I can make it out that such a promise belongs to me, I have enough to live on.

When a man is assured God hath given him his Son, he will then easily be induced to believe and expect, how shall he not with him give me all things? If once he looks upon God as a Father, he will then easily conceive what Christ says, If fathers that are evil can give good things to their children, how much more shall your Father give his Spirit to them that ask him? and if he gave his Son when we did not pray to him, how much more shall he with him give us all things we pray for?

In trading, he gets most by his commodity, that can forbear his money the longest: so does the Christian, that can with most patience stay for a return to his prayer. Such a soul shall never be ashamed of its waiting.

The gift of prayer may have praise from men; but it is the grace of prayer, that has power with God.

Pray for them thou lovest. Thou wilt never have any comfort of his friendship, for whom thou dost not pray.

Prayer is a key, which, being turned by the hand of faith, unlocks all God's treasures.

In prayer, it is better to have an heart, without words, than words without an heart.

To say, in compliment, "I am a sinner;" is easy: but to cry with the publican indeed, "God be merciful to me a sinner," is the hardest prayer in the world.

"God be merciful, in Christ, to me a sinner," are fit to be the last dying words of the greatest saint that lives.

A family without prayer is like an house without a roof, exposed to all the injuries of weather, and to every storm that blows.

Prayer is the breath of a regenerate man.

What we win by prayer, we shall wear with comfort.

Either praying will make a man leave off sinning, or sinning will make him leave off praying.

The Deity, and the sun, are, in this respect, similar; they cheer and refresh humble, cautious beholders; but put out the eye of such as are too daring, prying, and inquisitive.

A proud heart and a lofty mountain are never fruitful.

If once (like Hezekiah) we call in spectators to see our treasure, and grow proud of our gifts and comforts; then it is high time for God, if he loves us indeed, to send some messengers to carry those away from us, which carry our hearts away from him.

It requires more prowess, and greatness of spirit, to obey God faithfully, than to command an army of men; to be a Christian, than to be a captain.

None will have such a dreadful parting from Christ, in the last day, as they who, by profession, went half way with him, and then left him.

God is wise to conceal the succours he intends thee in the several changes of thy life, that so

he may draw thy heart into an entire dependence on his faithful promise. Therefore, though thou, perhaps, might not see thy God in the way, thou shalt surely find him in the end.

Judge not of God's love, by providences, but by promises.

When a believer is in darkness, and endeavours to reason away his unbelief, he will find all his reasonings but lost labour. There is only one thing, he can do, to purpose; and that is simply to cast anchor on God's naked promise.

What we term the course of nature, is the incessant administration of Providence.

He that eyes a providence, shall always have a providence to eye.

God, who feeds the ravens, will not starve his doves.

If God be your father, you can want nothing that is good: but the determination of what is good, must be left to his wisdom; for we are not so fit to judge of it, nor to discern our own good. We should, therefore, commit all to his fatherly care and wise providence. Indeed, he chooseth rather to profit us, than to please us, in his dispensations: and it is our duty to refer all to his wisdom and faithfulness.

If we trust God for our heavenly inheritance, we may well trust him for our daily maintenance; which he vouchsafeth to the birds of the air, to the beasts of the field, and even to his enemies. He that feedeth a kite, will he not feed a child? He that supplies his enemies, will he not take care of his family? You would think that person monstrously cruel, who would feed his dogs and starve his children. This cannot, without blasphemy, be imagined of our gracious and heavenly Father.

PROVIDENCE.

THE providence of God is one straight line, drawn from the point of his decree. A straight line it is, in itself: however crooked it may appear, through a false medium. God will do whatever he pleases: and what pleases him, ought to please us. It is above nature, it is contrary to nature, to make a full surrender of ourselves to his sovereign and absolute will. Grace alone can enable us to say, from the heart, "Thy will be done."

In a musical instrument, when we observe a number of strings set to harmony, we conclude, that some skilful musician had tuned them.

When we see thousands of men in a field, marshalled under their respective colours, all yielding exact obedience; we infer, that there is a general, to whose orders they are subject.

In a watch, when we observe springs and wheels, great and small, each so fitted, as to concur to an orderly motion, we acknowledge the skill of an artificer.

When we come into a printing-house, and see a vast variety of different letters, so regulated and disposed, as to make a book; we are, at once, convinced, that there is some composer, by whose art they were brought into such a frame.

When we behold a fair building, we conclude it had an architect; and,

When we see a stately ship, completely fitted out, and safely conducted to the port, we know, that it had builders and a pilot.

The visible world is such an instrument, army, watch, building, book, and ship, as undeniably

proves that God was and is the tuner, general, and artificer, the composer, architect, and pilot of it.

THE TWO PRINCIPLES IN MAN.

THERE are two principles, in a man that is born again; a principle of corrupt nature, and a principle of grace: the one is called, the old man; and the other the new. The old man continues unregenerate, to the last. No part in him is regenerated. He remains untouched, and is just the same he was, only deprived of his power and dominion. The new man is wholly regenerate. There is no unregenerate part in him. There is no sin in him, nor done by him: "he cannot sin, because he is born of God." "The king's daughter is all glorious within."

GRATITUDE.

OUR whole life should speak nothing but thankfulness; every condition and place we are in should be a witness of our thankfulness: this will make the times and places we live in the better for us. When we ourselves are monuments of God's mercy, it is fit we should be patterns of his praises, and leave monuments to others. We should think life is given to us to do something better than to live in: we live, not to live; our life is not the end of itself, but the praise of the Giver. God hath joined his glory and our happiness together: it is fit that we should refer all that is good to his glory, who hath joined his glory to our best good in being

glorified in our salvation. Praise is a just and due tribute for all God's blessings ; for what else do the best favours of God especially call for at our hands ? How do all creatures praise God but by our mouths ? It is a debt always owing, and always paying ; and the more we pay, the more we shall owe : upon the due discharge of this debt, the soul will find much peace. A thankful heart to God for his blessings is the greatest blessing of all. Were it not for a few gracious souls, what honour should God have of the unthankful world ? which should stir us up the more to be trumpets of his praises in the midst of his enemies ; because this hath a prerogative above our praising God in heaven ; for there God hath no enemies to dishonour him.

It is good to see blessings as they issue from grace and mercy. It much commends any blessing to see the love and favour of God in it, which is more to be valued than the blessing itself.

MORAL SUASION.

MORAL suasion of itself will never change the heart, or bring a sinner to Christ. The Scriptures expressly assert this. They assure us that no man cometh unto Christ unless the Father draw him. We have many proofs in fact. Christ was infinitely able to argue. He was well acquainted with all the arts of persuasion ; but "no man received his testimony." Paul had every possible advantage. He had excellent natural abilities, much literature, and great grace. He received his acquired endowments at the feet

of Gamaliel, and made such progress as made some conclude that much learning had made him mad. He received his gracious qualifications in the third heavens. But with all these attainments he could never persuade, or change a single heart. Not accompanied with divine power, his best discourses, adapted in every respect to his hearers, instead of bringing sinners to Christ, exposed him to the contemptuous titles of a babbler, a setter forth of strange Gods, and an insignificant creature, rude in speech.

Moral suasion never did, and never will produce love to Christ in the carnal heart, which is enmity. The utmost which the best reasoning can do in this matter is to produce a cold, dry, uninfluencing light in the head, and some transient uneasy emotions in the conscience; while the heart itself is left hard as the nether millstone. Sin is too strong for the best arguments. The hearts of men are fully set in them to do evil. The heart is dead, dark, shut, and makes positive exertions to keep out the light. The old man fights hard for his own safety, and the enjoyment of his lusts. If he appears at any time to yield, it is only a kind of ill formed resolution, and insincere promise to repent at some future period and convenient season. The resolutions and engagements of the unrenewed heart are like those of one half awake. He promises to rise, but instead of performing, instantly falls faster asleep.

THE EFFECTS OF INDECISION ON PERSONAL RELIGION.

ONE day the duty is begun,—devotion for instance, and reading the Scriptures,—and under the burning eye of a new and strong apprehension, carried on vigorously to the bound of its allotted season. On the second, the same is done with a small abatement of spirit. An interruption occurs on the third, which is accounted necessary, and the man is not displeased. The fourth brings the recurring duty ; but as the conviction is now rather remembered than felt, there is a corresponding want of ardour ; and it is decided that there is too much formality in a determined allotment of time ; the spirit revolts at restraint, and would rather measure the season by its own zeal ; and so the duty, to justify the decision, is this day lengthened. Next day it is greatly abridged. On the sixth there is a cold formula without the spirit ; the shoes of his carnality are not put off at the threshold of devotion ; and he may be guilty of the awful impiety of doing mockery to that Being whom his suppliant posture acknowledges Supreme ; he paints his own vain fancies on the screen of the sanctuary, mowing and chattering in prayer to the Almighty, whilst his heart is beneath his feet in dust,—in dust. The duty is again attempted on the seventh, but broken in upon by a pressing avocation ; a determination to spend the Sabbath of the morrow with undivided care, helps to justify him in judging it better to put off the course of daily duty to a remoter day, which he is careful to fix, when the interruption, which he foresees unavoidable for a number of days succeeding the present, shall of

itself have ceased, or preventive arrangements be made against it. Thus in one duty, and in a similar way in all, do the undecided and unsteady mock themselves. Their lives are marked at little intervals by short courses of good, which, had they been put together in continuity, might have carried them onwards, till the habit had been confirmed of progressive strength; but broken off at first at short stages, there is no onward way,—no accession of moral strength against farther attempts, but sure weakness in the consciousness of former failures. They pass from sin to repentance and again relapse,—of all beings the most unhappy, wanting the gay apathy of an unsmitten heart, and unable to justify themselves in their puny attempts to satisfy conviction. They have struggles in reference to Heaven, but in vain; they never gain the praise of overcoming one difficulty in the way. They take hold on eternal things, but soon let them go for meaner, and this of will, and, moreover, in the very moment of estimating them most highly; more foolish a thousand times than the caprice of the little child, that would drop the most precious jewel to snatch at a meaner, if a gaudier toy.

A HANDFUL OF WEEDS AND FLOWERS.

As a man on a bridge waiting for his friend plucks a handful of weeds and flowers, and, in the caprice of impatience, drops another and another into the flood beneath, without discrimination and without respect to the beautiful above the mean, to the budding sprig more than the decayed stalk, intent only to mark how they are

borne away by the current; so is the dispensation of death over the children of men. The statesman and the clown; the sage and the idiot; fathers in God, and light dancing women; the babe in its first curdled beauty; the strong bearded man; the patriarch whose locks are ripe and full of awe; the beautiful, the brave, the noble; every age and every degree, fall, in the same moment of time, before that mighty leveller. The love of mother and of sisters, a beautiful wreath of affection, and strong! yet cannot it upbind his sheer cold scythe; and the manly youth comes no more forth among the people at his father's right hand. There is not merely an apathy but a selfish hope in us that can distinctly propose reasons why we should live many years beyond the age of our neighbour that was buried yesterday; but who would dare, on this, to found a cause to delay his spiritual preparation, were it even the act of a day, and not the great work of this probationary life—on this, a presumption warred upon by a thousand daily and fatal accidents? Who will not rather, in the face of the above truth, bestir himself for his own safety and the consolation of his friends?

A NOTION OF SAFETY IN THE GREATEST DANGERS.

IN following a multitude, there is always more or less directly implied,—a notion of safety. This seems to be part of the instinct of lower animals; and it is a common feeling in man, whether innate or acquired in infancy. It is this which leads the ignorant religionist to rest in-

PLICIT faith in a creed of absurdities; and even in cases where want of knowledge and the weakness of natural religion can be no plea, but where the revealed commands of God are distinctly before men with all their sanctions, and addressed to every individual heart, there lurks in the minds of those who follow the multitude in things which these commands directly prohibit, a vague belief that the evil and danger are at least diminished, because they are not alone. In the case of unjust condemnation—each individual in the council argues, that his negative is of no avail amidst so many condemning votes, and therefore he need not incur the reproach of a dissent. He blames the multitude: and every little ring in the chain says it is not in me; and it is proved at last to the satisfaction of each heart, that the murder has been committed by a *general term*.

The Anglo-Indian, who sees an opportunity of speculating to advantage in the slave-trade, is at first staggered at the idea of making a market of our common humanity; but the influence of the multitude is around him, and he begins to see no crime in what is so common: that thousands are already in slavery, becomes the argument why more may be so, or further, that the Negroes in general were made for slavery. His wishes are measured, and a cloak of sophistry is made accordingly, "of ample room and verge enough" to cover their criminality. An excuse is found in the very cause of the sin; and, blind to an individual responsibility, he becomes a fearless trafficker in blood.

The apprehended terrors of death are less, that the loftiest intellect must submit; and because

we have a brother or sister before us in the unseen mystic world. And who does not feel the brooding sense of the dread judgment-day mitigated in the reflection, that around us shall be all the millions of our species? So much of this feeling is allowed for consolation; but weakness and sin are his who can derive from it a hope of safety, or any opiate to lull him in yielding, with less reserve, to the current of a common defecation. In the same class—must we name it of weakness?—are a thousand fanciful feelings, that sometimes have more influence over the whole man, than the broadest and most palpable dictates of reason and conscience;—to die in winter rather than summer;—to breathe ourselves away behind the midnight curtain and funeral lamp, rather than be disembodied in the unnatural glare of day;—who shall characterize such weaknesses as these? Perhaps it is a part of our ruin, not only that our best feelings have been broken down by sin, but that many have been lost which might have bound us to God through the medium of external nature; that so many are dim on the mystic leaves of the soul, and so transient in glimpses, that we cannot say how much they are of good.

LOVE.

LIKE the up-springing fire, its native sphere is above. Of necessity oft mingled with feelings of less ethereal touch, or borne down by passions dull and earthy, its virtue may appear doubtful or gross of element; but once solemnly enshrined in the soul, like the Vestal fires. it shall never be

out, but shall grow from point to point in measures of ascendancy ; and, in the darkness of that midnight, when the sound of the Bridegroom cometh on, shall it fill with odorous light the lamps of the wise virgins that haste to meet him. Harassed by sin on earth, it is fear of offending God ; surrounded by apostates, it is the zeal of Abdiel ; in doubt, it is prayer and trust ; in danger, the smile of a happy alternative ; it watches against temptations to sleep and indifference, that in the temple it may be reverence and attention of spirit ; it is contemplation, and wonder, and praise ; and faith in all things, to read in providences and on the sublime monuments of the universe, pledges of His truth who will come and will not tarry, against whose advent "all creatures sigh to be renewed."

THINGS IN WHICH THERE CAN BE NO RIVALSHIP.

In petty things there may be an envious rivalry ;—there is jealousy in the lover that would keep another from the equal regards of his mistress ; in the courtier is an equally exclusive spirit with regard to his Sovereign's favour ; but in the incalculable consequences of eternity, where every classification of being is under one of two distinctions,—extreme happiness, or extreme misery,—scarcely can it enter into the heart of a man, to desire an appropriation of Heaven to the exclusion of any his greatest enemy. In modest hope,—in anticipation of a state declared beyond the conception of man, but yet in uncertainty, does the Christian walk in that humility which

testifies of something that his soul desires infinitely. If greater his confidence and the assurance of a glorious reversion; his flowing amenity to the feelings of his brethren is, in proportion, above the generous anticipations of the man who, raised to unexpected affluence above his fellows, would almost apologize for his distinction, and be in haste to show himself glad at their measures of success. Every exercise of faith and love, aspiring to a supreme distinction, is to the mortification of self, and a more careful attention to the interests of another. The imitation of God to which this principle necessarily leads, copies not the dignity of an Imperial Sovereign communicating rarely and doubtfully with his implicit vassals; no, nor a proud mercy that will not condescend to be entreated and thanked,—independent of our free will,—overpowering with the sense of a great whole, but communicating not to the consideration of reason the details of its propriety,—nor unfolding its particular application to the lowest wants of our nature,—nor, in pride, requiring any rule of imitation, to extend its conquests or glory; but the wisdom of God in a mercy not less imperial because full of condescension, that indeed waited not for our supplication, but this not in haughtiness; that violates not our moral nor intellectual liberties; that deigns to be judged and approved of; and this wisdom of God not left to be deduced from the argument of his providence; this mercy less found out from a general announcement of his plan, or even a detailed revelation,—than its execution and visible application given in the life of Deity on earth,—indeed a man,—that, from our confirmed love, and the perfect

model of his conduct in all relations of life, a higher imitation might be derived; God more glorified in the first impulse of the heart; our rule of purity exact amidst temptations to defilement; and in this visible inculcation of mercy, a uniform principle to be in all God's creation; in the sympathetic reflection of our filial regard, from our Elder Brother to the rest of the wide brotherhood, an incontrovertible law of charity towards all men; and yet again, and not to be despised, the proportion of Christ's condescension to us, reminding us of duty in attention to the happiness of creatures lower in the scale, and which too have the benevolent care of the same God.

TEARS OF JOY.

THE praise of conquerors is a distempered flush of blood, through the pale tears of bereavement; but thine, holy Jesus of Nazareth! were triumphs on earth, celebrated by other tears,—the tears of joy.

Who sees not the glory of this character, nor tries to imitate, knows not the best nobility of our nature,—seeks not to be truly ennobled,—is mean,—is worthy of condemnation,—is condemned already.

MEDITATIONS.

LORD, I do discover a fallacy, whereby I have long deceived myself. Which is this: I have desired to begin my amendment from my birth-

day, or from the first day of the year, or from some eminent festival, that so my repentance might bear some remarkable date. But when those days were come, I have adjourned my amendment to some other time. Thus, whilst I could not agree with myself when to start, I have almost lost the running of the race. I am resolved thus to befool myself no longer. I see no day to to-day, the instant time is always the fittest time. In Nebuchadnezzar's image, the lower the members, the coarser the metal; the farther off the time, the more unfit. To-day is the golden opportunity, to-morrow will be the silver season, next day but the brazen one, and so long, till at last I shall come to the toes of clay, and be turned to dust. Grant therefore that to-day I may hear thy voice. And if this day be obscure in the calendar, and remarkable in itself for nothing else, give me to make it memorable in my soul thereupon, by thy assistance, beginning the reformation of my life.

LORD, when I am to travel, I never use to provide myself till the very time; partly out of laziness, loath to be troubled till needs I must; partly out of pride, as presuming all necessities for my journey will wait upon me at the instant. (Some say this is scholars' fashion, and it seems by following it I hope to approve myself to be one.) However, it often comes that my journey is finally stopped, through the narrowness of the time to provide for it. Grant, Lord, that my confessed improvidence in temporal, may make me suspect my providence in spiritual matters. Solomon saith, man goeth to his long home. Short preparation will not fit so long a journey. O let me not put

it off to the last, to have my oil to buy, when I am to burn it. But let me so dispose of myself, that when I am to die, I may have nothing to do but to die.

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATIONS.

LORD, I find that Ezekiel is in his Prophecies styled ninety times, and more, by this appellation, Son of man; and surely not once oftener than there was need for. For he had more visions than any one (not to say than all) of the prophets of his time. It was necessary, therefore, that his mortal extraction should often be sounded in his ears, Son of man, lest his frequent conversing with visions might make him mistake himself to be some angel. Amongst other revelations it was therefore needful to reveal him to himself, Son of man, lest seeing many visions might have made him blind to spiritual pride. Lord, as thou increasest thy graces in me, and favours on me, so with them daily increase in my soul the monitors and remembrancers of my mortality. So shall my soul be kept in a good temper, and humble deportment towards thee.

LORD, I read how Jacob (then only accompanied with his staff) vowed at Bethel, that if thou gavest him but bread and raiment, he would make that place thy house. After his return, the condition on thy side was over-performed, but the obligation on his part wholly neglected: for when thou hadst made his staff to swell, and to break into two bands, he, after his return, turned purchaser, bought a field in Shalem, intending there to set up his rest. But thou art pleased to

be his remembrancer in a new vision, and to spur him afresh, who tired in his promise. Arise, go to Bethel and make there an altar, etc. Lord, if rich Jacob forgot what poor Jacob did promise, no wonder, if I be bountiful to offer thee in my affliction what I am niggardly to perform in my prosperity. But O! take not advantage of the forfeitures, but be pleased to demand payment once again. Pinch me into the remembrance of my promises, that so I may reinforce my old vows with new resolutions.

LORD, when in my daily service I read David's Psalms, give me to alter the accent of my soul, according to their several subjects. In such psalms, wherein he confesseth his sins, or requesteth thy pardon, or praiseth for former, or prayeth for future favours, in all these give me to raise my soul to as high a pitch as may be. But when I come to such psalms wherein he curseth his enemies, O there let me bring my soul down to a lower note. For those words were made only to fit David's mouth. I have the like breath, but not the same spirit to pronounce them. Nor let me flatter myself, that it is lawful for me, with David, to curse thine enemies, let my deceitful heart entitle all mine enemies to be thine, and so what was religion in David prove malice in me, whilst I act revenge under the pretence of piety.

LORD, I read at the transfiguration that Peter, James, and John were admitted to behold Christ; but Andrew was excluded. So again at the reviving of the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue, these three were let in, and Andrew shut out. Lastly, in the agony the aforesaid three

were called to be witnesses thereof, and still Andrew left behind. Yet he was Peter's brother, and a good man, and an apostle; why did not Christ take the two pair of brothers? was it not pity to part them? But methinks I seem more offended thereat than Andrew himself was, whom I find to express no discontent, being pleased to be accounted a loyal subject for the general, though he was no favourite in these particulars. Give me to be pleased in myself, and thankful to thee, for what I am, though I be not equal to others in personal perfections. For such peculiar privileges are courtesies from thee when given, and no injuries to us when denied.

LORD, I read of my Saviour, that when he was in the wilderness, then the devil leaveth him, and behold angels came and ministered unto him. A great change in a little time. No twilight betwixt night and day. No purgatory condition betwixt hell and heaven, but instantly, when out devil, in angel. Such is the case of every solitary soul. It will make company for itself. A musing mind will not stand neuter a minute, but presently side with legions of good or bad thoughts. Grant, therefore, that my soul, which ever will have some, may never have bad company.

LORD, the apostle saith to the Corinthians, God will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able. But how comes he to contradict himself by his own confession in his next epistle? Where, speaking of his own sickness, he saith, we were pressed out of measure above strength. Perchance this will be expounded by propounding another riddle of the same apostle's: who, prais-

ing Abraham, saith, that against hope he believed in hope, That is, against carnal hope he believed in spiritual hope. So the same wedge will serve to cleave the former difficulty. Paul was pressed above his human, not above his heavenly strength. Grant, Lord, that I may not mangle or dismember thy word, but study it entirely, comparing one place with another. For diamonds only can cut diamonds, and no such comments on the scripture as the scripture.

LORD, I read that when my Saviour dispossessed the man's son of a devil, he enjoined the evil spirit to come out of him, and enter no more into him. But I find that when my Saviour himself was tempted of Satan, the devil departed from him for a season. Retreating, as it seems, with mind to return. How came it to pass, Lord, that he who expelled him finally out of others, did not propel him so from himself? Sure it does not follow, that because he did not, he could not do it. Or that he was less able to help himself, because he was more charitable to relieve others. No; I see my Saviour was pleased to show himself a God in other men's matters, and but a man in such cases wherein he himself was concerned. Being contented still to be tempted by Satan, that his sufferings for us might cause our conquering through him.

A SIBYL

A SIBYL came to Tarquinius Superbus king of Rome, and offered to sell unto him three tomes of her Oracles: but he, counting the price too high, refused to buy them. Away she went and

burnt one tome of them. Returning, she asked him whether he would buy the two remaining at the same rate: he refused again, counting her little better than frantic. Thereupon she burns the second tome; and peremptorily asked him, whether he would give the sum demanded for all the three, for the one tome remaining; otherwise, she would burn that also, and he would dearly repent it. Tarquin, admiring at her constant resolution, and conceiving some extraordinary worth contained therein, gave her her demand. There are three volumes of man's time; youth, man's estate, and old age; and ministers advise them to redeem this time. But men conceive the rate they must give to be unreasonable, because it will cost them the renouncing of their carnal delights. Hereupon one-third part of their life (youth) is consumed in the fire of wantonness. Again, ministers counsel men to redeem the remaining volumes of their life. They are but derided at for their pains. And man's estate is also cast away in the smoke of vanity. But preachers ought to press peremptorily on old people, to redeem, now or never, the last volume of their life. Here is the difference: the sibyl still demanded but the same rate for the remaining book; but aged folk (because of their custom in sinning) will find it harder and dearer to redeem this, the last volume, than if they had been chapmen for all three at the first.

JOHN KING OF FRANCE.

WHEN John king of France had communicated the order of the knighthood of the star to some of his guard, men of mean birth and extraction,

the nobility ever after disdained to be admitted into that degree, and so that order in France was extinguished. Seeing that nowadays drinking, and swearing, and wantonness are grown frequent even with base beggarly people ; it is high time for men of honour, who consult with their credit, to desist from such sins. Not that I would have noblemen invent new vices to be in fashion with themselves alone, but forsake old sins, grown common with the meanest of people.

ONE LOOKED ON THE WEST.

THE Sidonian servants agreed amongst themselves, to choose him to be their king, who, that morning, should first see the sun. Whilst all others were gazing on the east, one alone *looked on the west*. Some admired, more mocked him, as if he looked on the feet, there to find the eye of the face. But he first of all discovered the light of the sun shining on the tops of houses. God is seen sooner, easier, clearer in his operations than in his essence. Best beheld by reflection in his creatures. For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.

AN ITALIAN PRINCE.

AN Italian prince, as much delighted with the person as grieved with the prodigality of his eldest son, commanded his steward to deliver him no more money, but what the young prince should tell his own self. The young gallant fretted at his heart, that he must buy money at so

dear a rate, as to have it for telling it, but (because there was no remedy) he set himself to task, and being greatly tired with telling a small sum, he broke off in this consideration. Money may speedily be spent, but how tedious and troublesome is it to tell it! And by consequence how much more difficult to get it! Men may commit sin presently, pleasantly, with much mirth, in a moment. But O that they would but seriously consider with themselves how many their offences are, and sadly fall accounting them! And if so hard truly to sum their sins, sure harder sincerely to sorrow for them. If to get their number be so difficult, what is it to get their pardon?

•
BEAT THYSELF.

I SAW a mother threatening to beat her little child for not rightly pronouncing that petition in the Lord's prayer, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us. The child essayed and offered as well as it could to utter it, adventuring at tepasses, trepasses, but could not pronounce the word aright. Alas, it is a SHIBOLETH to a child's tongue, wherein there is a confluence of hard consonants together; and therefore if the mother had beaten defect in the infant for default, she deserved to have been beaten herself.

The rather because what the child could not pronounce the parents do not practise. O how lispingly and imperfectly do we perform the close of this petition, as we forgive them that trespass against us! It is well if with the child we endea-

your our best, though falling short in the exact observance thereof.

AS IT WAS.

SOME alive will be deposed for the truth of this strange accident, though I forbear the naming of place or persons.

A careless maid, which attended a gentleman's child, fell asleep whilst the rest of the family were at church; an ape, taking the child out of the cradle, carried it to the roof of the house, and there (according to his rude manner) fell a dancing and dandling thereof, down head, up heels, as it happened.

The father of the child, returning with his family from church, commented with his own eyes on his child's sad condition. Bemoan he might, help it he could not. Dangerous to shoot the ape where the bullet might hit the babe; all fall to their prayers as their best refuge, that the innocent child (whose precipice they suspected) might be preserved.

But when the ape was well wearied with its own activity, he fairly went down, and formally laid the child where he found it, in the cradle.

Fanatics have pleased their fancies these late years with turning and tossing and tumbling of religion, upward and downward, and backward and forward, they have cast and contrived it into a hundred antic postures of their own imagining. However, it is now to be hoped, that after they have tired themselves out with doing of nothing, but only trying and tampering this and that way to no purpose, they may at last return and leave religion in the same condition wherein they found it.

REPENTANCE.

THE difference between true and false repentance, is as great, as that between the running of water in the paths after a violent shower, and the streams that flow from a living fountain. A false repentance has grief of mind, and humiliation, only for great and glaring offences; or until it supposes pardon for them obtained; true repentance is a continued war against sin, a permanent, inward shame for its defilements, until death sounds the retreat.

There is no coming at the fair haven of eternal glory, without sailing through the narrow straits of repentance.

It is Christ, that grants repentance unto life, And, if ever you will repent, with a kind repentance, you must either have it from Christ, or go without it.

Repentance includes self-abhorrence: as a man not only loathes poison, but the very dish or vessel that smells of it.

The reproaches of Christ are precious. It is better to be preserved in brine, than rot in honey.

GODLINESS.

GODLINESS includes a supreme love of himself, and a constant prevailing desire to please him, mixed with a holy reverential awe, or fear of offending him. I have joined these together, because they appear of equal necessity and use to constitute that frame and temper of mind, wherein the essence of piety or true godliness doth consist. Fear is necessary to keep God in our

eye; it is the office of love to enthrone him in our heart. Fear cautiously avoids whatever may offend; love yields a prompt and liberal service. Fear regards God as a witness and judge; love cleaves to him as a friend, nay, a father. Fear maketh us watchful and circumspect; love renders us active and resolute. In short they go hand and hand, and mutually assist each other. Love keeps fear from being servile and distrustful; and fear keeps love from being forward and secure; and both spring from one root, namely, faith in God, as a being possessed of infinite perfection, and related to us as our Creator and Governor, our Redeemer and our Judge.

ADVANTAGE OF AFFLICTIONS.

AFFLICTIONS are God's most effectual means to keep us from losing our way to our heavenly rest. Without this hedge of thorns on the right hand and left, we should hardly keep the way to heaven. If there be but one gap open, how ready are we to find it, and turn out at it! When we grow wanton, or worldly, or proud, how doth sickness, or other affliction, reduce us? Every Christian, as well as Luther, may call affliction one of his best schoolmasters; and with David may say, "Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept thy word." Many thousand recovered sinners may cry, "O healthful sickness! O comfortable sorrows! O gainful losses! O enriching poverty! O blessed day that ever I was afflicted!" Not only the green pastures and still waters, but the rod and staff, they comfort us. Though the word and

Spirit do the main work, yet suffering so unbolts the door of the heart, that the word hath easier entrance.

When the grace of an afflicted saint is in exercise, his heart is like a garden of roses or a well of rose water, which, the more they are moved and agitated, the sweeter is the fragrance they exhale.

When God sends an adverse dispensation to the believer, it is with this message, "Go draw that sinner from the love of the world; go take away that comfort—he is going to make an idol of it."

The reasonableness of present afflictions will appear, if we consider that they are the way to the rest—that they keep us from mistaking our rest, and from losing our way to it—that they quicken our pace towards it—that they chiefly incommode our flesh—and that under them God's people have often the sweetest foretastes of their rest.

AFFLICTIONS OF GOD'S CHOSEN SERVANTS.

Those who are of most precious account with God, and highly favoured by him, are usually exercised with sharp afflictions. The singularity and greatness of a calamity exasperates the sorrow, when it is apprehended as a sign of an extraordinary guilt in the afflicted, and of severe displeasure in God that sends it; but to prevent trouble that ariseth from that apprehension, the Scripture records the heavy afflictions that happened to God's chosen servants and favourites. *Moses*, whom God honoured with the most con-

descending and familiar discoveries of himself, was tried by long afflictions. *David*, a man after God's own heart, was a long time hurled to and fro by tempestuous persecutions from his unjust and implacable enemies. *Isaiah*, who was dignified with such heavenly revelations, that his description of the sufferings of Christ seems rather the history of an evangelist, than the vision of a prophet, was sawn asunder.

EXERCISE OF THE CHRISTIAN GRACES.

LET your hope enter within the veil, in the full and delightful anticipation of your speedy admission. And is this the only grace that should enter it? No. Let love enter within the veil and say, "whom have I in heaven but thee;" and let faith enter it and say, "I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living:" let patience enter, and behold the good resting from their sorrows: let gratitude enter, and take up its song and its harp; and let humility enter, and see how all its honours are devoted to Jesus: let charity enter, and mark how, midst all the varieties in character, origin, and glory among its inhabitants, there is but one heart: let desire enter and say, O when shall I come and appear before God! and let joy enter and drink of its rivers of pleasure. Soon shall the period of your actual admission arrive. The forerunner has entered for you; and as you would wish that your entrance should not be with fear and trembling, with doubt and hesitation, "give all diligence to make your calling and election sure, and then there shall be administered to you an abundant

entrance into the everlasting kingdom of your Lord and Saviour." There you shall find a temple without a veil, a church without spot, day without night, worship without a pause, youth without decay, happiness without measure, and glory without end. Manifest a respect, high, constant, and universal, to the commandments of God. "Blessed are they who do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city."

DANGERS IN PROFESSION.

Of all dangers in profession, let professors take heed of this, namely, of a customary, traditional, or doctrinal, owning such truths as ought to have their accomplishment in themselves, while they have no experience of the reality and efficacy of them. This is plainly to have a form of godliness, and to deny the power of it. And of this sort of men do we often see many turning atheists, scoffers, and open apostates. Hence it is that the knowledge and profession of the truth with many is so fruitless, inefficacious, and useless. It is not known, it is not understood, nor believed, in its relation unto Christ, on which account alone it conveys either life or power unto the soul. Men profess they know the truth, but they know it not in its proper order, harmony, and use: it leads them not unto Christ, it brings not Christ unto them, and so is lifeless and useless. Hence, often none are more estranged from the life of God than such who have much notional knowledge of the doctrines of the scripture: for they are all of them

useless, and subject to be abused, if they are not improved to form Christ in the soul, and transform the whole person into his likeness and image. This they will not effect, where their relation unto him is not understood; where they are not received and learned as a revelation of him, with the mystery of the wisdom and will of God in him. For whereas he is our life, and in our living unto God we do not so much live as he liveth in us, and the life we lead in the flesh is by the faith of him; so that we have neither principle nor power of spiritual life, but in, by, and from him; whatever knowledge we have of the truth; if it do not effect an union between him and our souls, it will be lifeless in us, and unprofitable to us. It is learning the truth as it is in Jesus, which alone reneweth the image of God in us. Where it is otherwise, where men have notions of evangelical truths, but know not Christ in them, whatever they profess, when they come really to examine themselves, they will find them of no use unto them, but that all things between God and their souls are stated on natural light and common presumptions.

Study the holy scriptures, especially the New Testament; therein are contained the words of eternal life—it has God for its author—salvation for its end; and truth without mixture for its matter.

To read of events without observing the hand of God in them, is to read as atheists; to read, and not to observe how all events conduce to carry ~~on~~ the work of redemption, is to read as deists.

AN ARGUMENT WITH THE DEVIL.

I HAVE nothing to do with the devil, neither hath he given me any disturbance all the time of my sickness. But, be it so, let him come, let him attack me, and try his strength upon a poor, miserable sinner; I will not therefore despond in my mind; for I know that I have not sinned against him, but against my God; wherefore, following the example of the Israelites in the wilderness, I will show to him not the brazen serpent indeed, but the Son of God hanging upon the cross; and I will say, it is against this person I have sinned, and not against thee; to him I wholly commit myself, for I believe he hath paid a sufficient price to God the Father for my sins. Wherefore be gone, O devil, and turn thy darts against the seed of the woman: if you overcome him, you overcome me also.

OF CHRIST.

CHRIST made himself like to us, that he might make us like to himself.

Christ must needs have died: how else could sin be expiated, the law satisfied, the devil conquered, and man be saved?

They that deny themselves for Christ, shall enjoy themselves in Christ.

Men had rather hear of Christ crucified for them, than be crucified for Christ.

If Christ denied innocent nature out of love to us, shall not we deny corrupt nature out of love to him?

Christ by his death appeared to be the son of

man, by his resurrection he appeared to be the son of God.

Christ was the great promise of the Old Testament, the spirit is the great promise of the New.

Christ's strength is the Christian's strength.

If we would stand, Christ must be our foundation; if we would be safe, Christ must be our sanctuary.

In regard of natural life, we live in God; in regard of spiritual life, Christ lives in us.

He that thinks he hath no need of Christ, hath too high thoughts of himself; he that thinks Christ cannot help him, hath too low thoughts of Christ.

Presumption abuses Christ, despair refuses him.

Christ satisfied God to the uttermost, and therefore can save sinners to the uttermost.

The blood of Christ which satisfied the justice of God, may satisfy the conscience of an awakened sinner.

If sin was better known, Christ would be better thought of.

If sin doth not taste bitter, Christ cannot taste sweet.

When sin is hell, Christ is heaven.

There is no passage from sin to holiness, till we are passed from sin to Christ.

Christ may have an interest in us, though we may not be able to see our interest in him.

Christ hath entreated God to be reconciled to us, and now he entreats us to be reconciled to God.

God will give us nothing for our sakes, but he will deny us nothing for Christ's sake.

A PATHETIC INVITATION TO COME TO CHRIST

HAVE you sins, or have you none?—If you have, whither should you go, but to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world?—have you souls, or have you none?—If you have, whither should you go but to the Saviour of souls? Is there a life to come, or is there not? If there is, whither should you go but to him, who only hath the words of eternal life? Is there a wrath to come, or is there not? If there is, whither should you go but to him who only can deliver from the wrath to come?—And will he not receive you?—If he yielded himself into the hands of them that sought his life, will he hide himself from the hearts of them that seek his mercy? If he was willing to be taken by the hands of violence, is he not much more willing to be taken by the hands of faith? He that died for thy sins, will he cast thee off for thine infirmities? O come, come, come!—I charge you come—I beseech you come—come and he will give you life. Come, and he will give you rest. Come, and he will receive you. Knock and he will open to you. Look to him and he will save you.—Did any ever come to him for a cure, and go away without it? Thou wouldst find something in thyself, but thou findest nothing but what thou hast reason to be ashamed of; but let not that hinder, but further thy coming.—Come as thou art; come poor, come needy, come naked, come empty, come wretched, only come, only believe; his heart is free, his arms are open, it is his joy and his crown to receive thee.—If thou art willing, he never was otherwise.

REMARKS ON PRAYER.

TRUE devotion consists in having our hearts always devoted to God, as the sole fountain of all happiness, and who is ready to hear and to help his otherwise helpless and miserable creatures. It is to be obtained—

1stly. By earnest prayer! He that hungers and thirsts after righteousness will certainly be filled.

2dly. By possessing our hearts with a deep sense of our own misery and sinfulness, our wants and danger.

3dly. By considering God's goodness, power, and readiness to help.

Lastly. By convincing our hearts of the vanity of every thing else to afford us any real help or comfort.

Dying persons are generally more devout than others, because they then see their misery; that nothing in this world can help them, and that God is their only refuge.

The spirit of God will not dwell in a divided heart. We cannot feel the pleasures of devotion, while the world is our delight. Not that all pleasures are criminal, but the closer our union with the world, the less our union with God. A Christian, therefore, who strives after devotion, should taste sensual pleasures very sparingly; should make necessity, not bodily delight, his rule.

He that would be devout, must beware of indulging a habit of wandering in prayer; it is a crime that will grow upon us, and deprive us of the happiness we pray for.

Avoid, as much as may be, multiplicity of business. Neither the innocency nor the goodness of our employment will excuse, if it possess our hearts when we are praying to God.

Never be curious to know what passes in the world, any farther than duty obliges you ; it will only distract the mind when it should be better employed.

Never intermit devotion, if you can help it ; you will return to your duty like Sampson, shorn of his locks, weak and indifferent as other people of the world.

The oftener we renew our intercourse with God, the greater will be our devotion. Frequent prayer, as it is an exercise of holy thoughts, is a most natural remedy against the power of sin. Importunity makes no change in God, but it creates in us such dispositions as God thinks proper to reward.

Make it a law to yourself to meditate before you pray, as also to make certain pauses, to see if your hearts go along with your lips. They whose hearts desire nothing, pray for nothing.

He that has learnt to pray as he ought, has got the secret of a holy life.

The best way to prevent wandering in prayer, is not to let our minds wander too much at other times ; but to have God always in our thoughts, in the whole course of our lives.

The most sure way to avoid this, is to dedicate some time, every day of our lives, to the worship of God : by doing this we shall retain God in our knowledge, provided it be performed out of a deep sense of our own wants and miseries, with a firm faith in God's promises to fulfil the desires of them that fear him, and with an eye to the

blood of Jesus our Redeemer, for whose sake, and through whose suffering, we are reconciled to God, and God to us.

DECEITFULNESS OF THE HEART.

"ALL the ways of man are clean in his own eyes." He looks with affected, it may be, with honest surprise at the sins, follies, and crimes, of others, which he may have already committed in the same or in differing forms. He is secretly injuring the reputation, or quietly planning to profit by the confidence of those who praise and trust him; while his anger is kindled, and carefully exposed against those who, for being less artful, are less fortunate in vile attempts. Crimes and miscarriages happen around him; and in the *goodness of his surprise*, he forgets the failures of the past, and predicts the virtues and successes of his future life. He is disgusted with the pride of wealth and office, and declares that nothing so elevates and adorns all distinction as humility. He scorns the airs of vanity, the timidity, the diffidence of speech and action that is inspired by the presence of excellence and superiority; but thinks not of the stupidity of boldness, the meanness of envy, and the vanity and pride of scorn. He soon sees one haughty, and, like himself, perhaps, in all but presumption, whose actions seem to say—stand back, I am richer or wiser or holier than thou; and he is "choaked with indignation." He pities the weakness of those who shun or dread places of great temptation to dishonesty and vice; blames and persecutes those who fail in them, and enters into them himself, invites the scrutiny of all; and, forewarned and

determined as he is, is soon enticed, is suspected, is weakened in his confidence of incorruptibility, but not softened in the tones of his censure or impaired in the ingenuity of self-excuse. He has erred when strongly tempted, and others seem to him to have erred without inducement. He even sees those who do not blush to own their iniquities, and who, regardless of reputation, are abandoned to intemperance, to sensuality, and to what he suspects but knows not—always suspecting a little more than he knows of evil in others. His sins are smaller and cleaner things; and if they are not suspected or exposed, he has surely too much regard for virtue to make them known or to repeat them openly. He has no glorying in them; his glorying is in the credit of better things. He can however talk of others' sins without thinking of his own. He can witness their falls without a fear of stumbling. He can injure their reputation without infidelity to his own. He can distress their households while he has the satisfaction and the virtue of providing for his own. He is as selfish a man as ever lived, and more selfish than any that ever lived by honesty; and yet selfishness in his view is no crime; it is too common to be regarded as a blemish of character; it is a wrinkle indeed, but like those of the face, it is the work of a universal and inexorable law which he had no concern in making and which he rather obeys than approves. Selfishness no great defect! Selfishness not a thing to be detested! the very leaven that works us into all the moral deformities we ever exhibit—the very thing in which our difference from excellence, from God and angels, and ourselves as by creation we were, is most clearly seen! Is

this the harmless creature the man seems to think it! This is his production in a sense in which he never made any thing else. He seems to have produced it out of *his own material*. But how does his offspring work with him? Why, it helps him to learn that many sins and some vices may consist with reputation of virtue, and that honesty may be too exact to consist with the quickest and greatest gain. And he soon sees a fortune, an offer, a pleasure, to be gained by some act of treachery, fraud or robbery, and he looks at it—he makes the trial, and is thrown aside in regard to the affections and confidence of men—a subject, in turn, of surprise and warning to those who are going the same round, and will come, if the grace of God does not prevent, to the same end.

IMPROVEMENT.

NONE are so apt to love strongly, as those who gain hardly; none so apt to be eager for more, as those who unduly value what is gotten; none so apt to clap the wings of scorn and victory, as those who think they are rising in their own strength; and those who, in that strength, have fallen unobserved. None are so apt to strike the bell of astonishment at the unkindness and injustice of others, as those who have been unkind and unjust without detection; and none so apt to pursue with severity those who are not skillfully dishonest, as those who are habitually and remorselessly benignant to defraud.

THE SENSE OF HAPPY CHANGE.

As the transition from the dark chamber of a long and painful malady to vernal air, when the soft gold of day falls sweetly on the eyelids, and the gentle wind raises and animates the sadly-smoothed and uninstinctive locks, making a man humbly glad, and attentive to every thing—even the little fly on the sunny wall, and the slightest murmur of creeping waters ; so is the sense of happy change from the uncertain and painful dreams of sinful life, to the opening day-light of Heaven, that renders us, as before, alive to the least duty, and fills with the same humility, as the expectancy of hope.

And thus the beautiful graces by every combination are linked together : descending from above in a comely chain, they take man by the hand, and having untied the dismal bonds where-with he was left bound to the chariot-wheels of God's smoking indignation, draw him in their own living assured chain, toward and up to the golden throne of Heaven. There is the fullness of love, to which every other grace hath become an element of beauty : here a faint and imperfect manifestation, there a full development under all the colours of Heaven.

As from the blue-barred and cloudy skies of morn, may fly forth the meridian with wide wings of sunshine and breezy shadows ; as from the motionless and retired chrysalis beneath the eaves, springs the painted butterfly, personified element of the summer's beauty, catching the colours of the sun, and wavering away in the blue liquid noon ; so from its birth on Earth is the perfection of love in Heaven.

DILIGENCE IN BUSINESS—A CHRISTIAN DUTY.

It cannot from any reason be argued, that the Christian must be deficient in the necessary business of every-day life, more than his worldly neighbour. Far from being undiligent as at a post which he may despise; and a duty which may be dispensed with ;—like the little hireling maid, who redoubles her exertions near the close of her term, that her services may be approved, and her wages paid without grudge, and the glad liberty be hers again to revisit her delightful home, so does the Christian the work of his life, more assiduously and with greater care, the higher his final hope.

To a man without the first principle of religion, there lacks, however prudent the constitution of his habits and economy of life, the sense of this world in proper subordination to religion, which gives zest to every thing : a vagueness of enjoyment is implied in the very possibility of his renovation, the dim consciousness of something postponed, not the less depressive because indistinct ; unlike the pure satisfaction of him in any amusement, who has provided for the one thing needful ; as the diligent school-boy enters upon his evening play with unqualified alacrity, his task against the morrow prepared.

OPPOSITE EFFECTS OF AFFLICTION.

AFFLICTIONS to the good man, are means that unbind him gradually from this life, and draw his heart toward another. To the bad man are they provocative of peevishness, of hardness of heart, and dislike of the chastener. To the one

overflowing, they have yet a peculiarity of blessing, like the inundations of the Nile, to fertilize what they overflow ; to the other, they bear the usual consequences of flooding waters,—sand and sterility.

STAIRS OF SAND.

O ! WHETHER in youth, or whether in old age, when the heart hath become the sepulchre of youth's desires, the delights of this mere life are but "stairs of sand," and a man cannot mount by them into Heaven : tired and struck by the wand of Experience, they are crumbled into a heap of friable dust : The one end of that wand is Time, and the other is Truth.

THE WORK AND DEFINITION OF DECISION.

No characteristic of man, no exhibition of his mind, takes such a striking and splendid illustration, as this quality of decision, from the history of our species. It must indeed be strongly marked, because by it have been brought about the most wonderful changes on our globe. It draws the boundaries of kingdoms as distinctly as by a chain of mountains or the walling sea. It levels hills and raises up valleys. It built the Chinese wall and the pyramids of Djezza. It was the magnificent attribute of the Barbarian soldier-king who subdued a thousand nations, and left in last command to turn the course of a river, and make his grave beneath its channels, that it might no more be found beneath the returning waters. In a single mind it hath controlled half the world ; stayed the clogged wheels of society with blood ;

buried old thrones; raised up new. In a single mind it hath effected the most glorious reformation in political and religious society. It is always unexpected by an opponent, and hath moved, approached, conquered, before he is aware. It bears in grand masses upon the weak point of an adversary's battle, and cuts his strength in twain. In poetry it is epic grandeur. In architecture it is severe simplicity, able to make a man shed tears. In oratory it first simplifies, and then throws a mass of eloquent illustration upon the cleared particulars. It is unwearied benevolence in despite of ingratitude. It is a direct face and step towards Eternal Truth. It is manly simplicity of character in all things, that alone stands each test,—a simplicity of which the world is never weary, and which, like the bread and water of our natural life, never breeds loathing, but is ever desired as a necessary staple in the mutual faith of men. In all things it is economy of passion and energy,—without waste,—with a determined application.

MEANS OF ACQUIRING DECISION.

By taking care always to conquer in the beginnings of their state, the Romans gradually acquired that self-confidence, and commanded that fear in their neighbours, which led them in quick progress to be masters of the world's fate; in matters however little important to appearance, they conquered at first by toil and anxiety; but afterwards the memory of their fathers' deeds,—a noble self-respect in themselves, whilst awe in other nations,—in styling their arms invincible, made them in event almost to be so.

Thus is decision taught, which itself turns round and teacheth all things well: Thus is built up that strong and large frame-work of the mind, around which the young tendrils of genius may hang their brittle rings, till maturity swell in their stems, and the golden fruit be put forth. Whether or not all the aims of his life have been reached, the decisive man has not missed his high reward. Our health of body is nothing bettered that we have reached a certain point in our walk,—it hath been improved by the exercise of the way; and happiness, which is the health of the soul, is found rather in the pursuit than in the final object; whether or not augmented in the latter, yet is it never altogether missed in the decisive measures of the former. How different the glow of energy in the well constituted mind, from the relaxed habits of the irresolute, who, a victim to the dangerous revolutions which a constant change of pursuit or profession makes in any mind, has lost enthusiasm for every thing; who, from the imprudent constitution of his habits, finds a palling uniformity in what should be delicacies; and is equally unfit for earth and Heaven! Melancholy in most cases is the portion of those who have not been taught habits of decision.

FRUITS OF DECISION.

SELF-CONFIDENCE and self-respect grow from habits of decision; not those feelings which set up self as the only oracle, and despise all opinions of others; but such as lead a man to consider well the dignity of his nature,—that noble self-government which fails not in duty towards another.

And such a man, accustomed to look on himself as heir to an immortal existence, walks in this world as beneath the lights of starry and eternal mansions; taught to measure his hours by their appropriate exercises, he knows the real value of time; and he is the more diligent to improve his soul from the further conviction, that he who does so now creates measures of capacity that shall never shrink; he draws back from sin as not only hateful to God, but unworthy of his own nature; and can readily appreciate that salvation which delivers from its stain as well as its punishment. The same spirit is further promoted by that generous rivalry, in which is found the great advantage of public education. Many standards are promised to the mind; and, from superiority in one case, enthusiasm is provoked and the youth is taught to aspire after the highest; against the severe study and noble aims that are set before him, there is a strength called forth, beyond the easy appliances of learning of a bent mind; and magnificence of soul is the high result.

INSTANCES OF JUST ESTIMATION.

It is common to despise the vulgar and all their opinions; and because the learned cannot find a distinction above them in the Christian nomenclature, nor an exemption from the same humble duties, they are dissatisfied with Jesus of Nazareth and his pride-subduing precepts: this is their vanity of intellect. But when seen what Christianity is ordering from the lowest elements of human nature, and when attention and admiration and co-operation have passed into Christian

Patriotism, the vulgar can no longer be contemned—a brotherhood—the triumph of ennobling Christianity—the elements of a Heaven—lustrous as the Throne itself of God ; proud intellect is humble, and acknowledges that their present degradation becomes a circumstance of sublimity. And from the same principle, the rich man begins to minister to the poor man ; and sees in his thin and weather-beaten locks, if found in the way of righteousness, a mark beyond the beauty of Lebanon with its sainted cedars. This is one very difficult duty in life. So influenced, the poor man himself can smile against the world's despute, as one not known under a mask ; and remembering that Christ, and after Him his Apostles wore the symbols of his condition, he is determined to teach as they did, in his own little circle, and maintain the character of poverty, giving, in good example, and dutiful submission to God, despite of hard conditions, a sublime lesson to the rich. This is another difficult duty in life. So influenced, even the poor profligate, whose better thoughts have come too late, and who weeps solemn tears, apart from his family, that he may not disgrace it, over a life destroyed, that might have been useful, and the ends of his being ill-accomplished,—is yet content that his name be ever linked to the waters of infamy, if he may be a beacon to others, and even in dishonoured place, serve a little the cause of Christ. This assuredly is the most difficult contentment in life. Yet he dreads the exposure of futurity, and the rebuke of Christ the undefiled One, and the severe faces of the pure Seraphim ; and cries like a little child for the sanctification of blood. And will not He, whom the hearts of a thousand Magda-

lenes name of mercy, who on earth put a towel round his loins to wipe the feet of poor men, take him up and declare he shall not yet be shamed ?

OF REPENTANCE.

REPENTANCE begins in the humiliation of the heart, and ends in the reformation of the life.

Though we want power to repent; yet we not want means to repent, nor power to use these means.

He that repents of sin, as sin, doth implicitly repent of all sin.

Let not sinful pleasures prevent godly sorrows.

An humble confession of sin brings shame to ourselves, but glory to God.

You cannot repent too soon. There is no day like to-day. Yesterday is gone, to-morrow is God's, not your own. And think how sad it will be to have your evidences to seek, when your cause is to be tried; to have your oil to buy, when you should have it to burn!

Let the hopes of mercy encourage to the exercise of repentance.

Turn to God, and he will turn to you; and then you are happy, though all the world turn against you.

If we think amiss of Christ, we shall never believe; if we think well of sin, we shall never repent.

If we put off our repentance to another day, we have a day more to repent of, and a day less to repent in.

If we study to honour God, we cannot do it better than by confessing our sins, and laying ourselves low at the feet of Christ.

Godly sorrow is the sorrow of love, the melting of the heart; love is the pain and pleasure of a mourning heart.

The evangelical penitent loves and grieves. "Alas, (saith he) that I, who am as high as heaven in privilege, should be as deep as hell in iniquity! Instead of repenting, I have run farther on score! Instead of honouring God, I have dishonoured him! Instead of pleasing him, I have provoked him! Instead of following him, I have forsaken him!—O what bowels have I grieved! How can I sin against my Jesus? Shall I deny and crucify my Saviour? He was crucified for me, and shall he be crucified by me! Shall I wound his heart and pierce his side again, and give him cause to say, These are the wounds I received in the house of my friends."

OF FAITH.

RELIANCE is the essence of faith, Christ is the object, the word is the food, and obedience the proof: so that the true faith is a depending upon Christ for salvation in a way of obedience, as he is offered in the word.

The true tears of repentance flow from the eyes of faith.

Though faith be necessary to our justification, good works are necessary to our salvation.

We must derive our works from faith, and demonstrate our faith by works.

God is often pleased to embitter a life of sense, that he may endear the life of faith.

A steadfast faith begets a constant peace.

The more faith, the more humility.

Keep good principles, and they will keep you.

Men would first see, and then believe; but they must first believe, and then see.

As believers live upon Christ, by faith, so they live to him by obedience.

There is a difference between contending for the faith, and babbling for a fancy.

Assurance sets the notion of faith too high, assent too low.

There is as much difference between faith and assurance, as there is between the root and the fruit.

There may be joy without faith, and there may be faith without joy.

Human faith is founded upon probability, divine faith upon certainty.

If the exercise of faith be the care of your souls, the end of your faith will be the salvation of your souls.

OF HUMILITY.

To be low is the safest and comeliest posture for sinful creatures.

It is the creature's honour to abase himself before the most high God.

God had rather see his children humble for sin, than proud of grace.

If men did but know themselves more, they would be more humble.

They that are humble, are content and thankful.

An humble spirit is a charitable and quiet spirit.

Judge thyself with a judgment of sincerity, and thou wilt judge others with a judgment of charity.

To humble ourselves is the only way to rise.

Believers must be humble for sin pardoned, and because it is pardoned.

When Paul was a pharisee, he thought he was blameless: when he was a christian, the chief of sinners; before, any thing but Christ; now, none but Christ.

If Christ humbled himself for our nature, we should humble ourselves to honour his name.

Neither all the devils in hell, nor all the temptations in the world, can hurt that man that keeps himself humble and depending on Christ.

It is no humiliation to aggravate sin above Christ's saving power.

Despair is a corruption of humiliation, it is a counterfeit humility, a sullen pride, a covert of a hardened spirit.

This is true humiliation, which (like a har-binger) makes way for Christ, and throws the soul at his feet.

Our Saviour was a preacher and pattern of humility: he did so admire it, that he set them in the highest form, that had the lowest hearts.

None so high and glorious as Christ, yet none so meek and lowly.

OF CONTENTMENT.

HUMILITY is the mother of contentment.

The deeper your self-abhorrence, the easier is self-resignation.

They that deserve nothing should be content with any thing.

Bless God for what you have, and trust God for what you want.

We must commit our souls to God's keeping, and submit ourselves to God's disposing.

We should obey his revealed will, and then be resigned to his providential will.

If we cannot bring our condition to our mind, we must labour to bring our mind to our condition.

Neither contentment nor discontentment arises from the outward condition, but from the inward disposition.

If a man is not content in that state he is in, he will not be content in any state he would be in.

OF PRIDE.

To be sure a man is proud of that which he scorns another for the want of.

That which a man envies in another, he would be proud of, if he had it himself.

Pride is founded on error and self-ignorance.

Some are proud of what they are, others of what they are not.

There is a sullen pride in not acknowledging benefits.

A man may be poor in purse, yet proud in spirit.

There may be pride in rags, in a solemn look, and lowly carriage.

God had rather his people should fare poorly, than live proudly.

How canst thou be a judge of another's heart, that dost not know thine own?

As the first step heavenward is humility, so the first step hellward is pride.

Pride counts the gospel foolishness, but the gospel always shows pride to be so.

Pride is a sin that will rise out of the ashes of other sins.

Folly is the beginning of pride, and shame shall be the end of it; either temporal repentance or eternal punishment.

Shall the sinner be proud that is going to hell? shall the saint be proud that is newly saved from it?

Thou that canst call nothing thy own but sin and shame, art thou proud? A worm, and proud? Emptiness, and proud? Perishing, and proud?

It is unreasonable for the creature to be proud, much more the sinner.

OF HYPOCRISY.

An hypocrite is one that neither is what he seems, nor seems what he is.

An hypocrite is the picture of a saint; but his paint shall be washed off, and he shall appear in his own colours.

God is in good earnest with us, we ought therefore to be so with him.

An hypocrite is hated of the world for seeming a Christian, and hated of God for not being one.

OF TEMPTATION.

TEMPTATIONS are instructions.

He is over-wise that goes out of God's way to escape a cross.

God will either keep his saints from temptations, by his preventing mercy, or in temptations by his supporting mercy, or find a way for their escape by his delivering mercy.

A Christian that lives here among his enemies, should never stir abroad without his guard.

Satan tempts to sin, the spirit counsels against sin.

If you follow Satan, you will find the tempter prove a tormentor; if you follow the spirit, you will find the counsellor prove a comforter

OF THE WORLD.

If the world be our portion here, hell will be our portion hereafter.

We must neither leave the world, nor love it.

The world promises comforts, and pays sorrows.

Love the men of the world, but not the things of the world.

To have a portion in the world, is a mercy; to have the world for a portion, is a misery.

Whatever we make an idol of, will be a cross to us if we belong to Christ; a curse to us if we do not.

We should endeavour to pass through this world with a cheerful indifferency.

Covetousness betrayed our Saviour, envy accused him, and the friendship of the world condemned him.

Man is not made for the world, but the world for man.

It is our business in this world, to secure an interest in the next.

The things of the world, the more they are known, the less they are admired; but the things of God, the more they are known the more they are admired.

There is no miss of the creature, where there is a full enjoyment of the Creator.

If thou art not afraid of the world, I fear thou art a friend of the world, and an enemy to God.

As you love your souls, beware of the world; it hath slain its thousands, and ten thousands. What ruined Lot's wife? the world. What ruined Judas? the world. What ruined Simon Magus? the world. What ruined Demas? the world. And, what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

To speak the truth freely: riches are dust, honours are shadows, and pleasures are bubbles, and man a lamp of vanity, compounded of sin and misery.

OF THE WORD OF GOD.

THE word of God must be nearer to us than our friends, dearer to us than our liberty, and pleasanter to us than all earthly comforts.

Take the candle of God's word, and search the corners of your heart.

We speak to God in prayer; God speaks to us in his word.

Two things are to be trembled at; the presence of God which fills all places, and the word of God which reacheth to all times.

All arguments against the word of God are fallacies; all the conceits against the word are

delusions ; all derision against the word is folly : and all opposition against the word is madness.

When God threatens, that's a time to repent : when he promises, that's a time to believe ; when he commands, that's a time to obey.

If a man believed the threatenings of the word of God, he would tremble, and fly to the promise for refuge.

As Christ came out of his Father's bosom, so the promises came out of Christ's side.

The church cannot live without faith, and faith cannot live without promises.

We have less power to stand than our first parents, but we have better promises.

Whatever promises faith takes hold of, it makes the good thing there promised to be our own.

God's promises are a defence against man's threatenings.

The promises of the gospel are sealed to us by the oath of the Father, the blood of the Son, and the witness of the Spirit.

OF PROVIDENCE.

PROVIDENCES are sometimes dark texts that want an expositor.

God's providence fulfils his promise.

Count every day, as well as you can, the providences of God towards you that day.

Without God's providence nothing falls out in the world ; without his commission nothing stirs ; without his blessing nothing prospers.

OF AFFLICTIONS.

It is a worse sign to be without chastisement than to be under chastisement.

Two things should comfort suffering Christians; viz. all that they suffer is not hell; yet it is all the hell they shall suffer.

Afflictions are not so much threatened as promised to the children of God.

To be a Christian, and a suffering Christian, is a double honour.

By affliction God separates the sin which he hates, from the soul which he loves.

The more a man fears sin, the less will he fear trouble.

Afflictions are of God's sending, but of sin's deserving.—Sin is the poison, affliction the physic.

When God is humbling us, let us endeavour to humble ourselves.

If the servants of God are never so low, yet his heart is with them, and his eye upon them.

God takes it unkindly when we grieve too much for any outward thing; because it is a sign we fetch not that comfort from him which we should.

Though the hand of God may be against you, yet the heart of God may be towards you.

What if the providence of God cross you, if the promise of God bless you?

What is bearing a temporal cross, to the wearing an eternal crown?

Our enjoyments are greater than our afflictions, less than our sins.

Our sufferings should stir up our graces, as well as our griefs.

OF PRAYER.

FILL up the void spaces of your time with meditation and prayer.

They are safest who are most in their closets; who pray not to be seen of men, but to be heard of God.

Prayer doth not consist of gifted expressions, and a volubility of speech; but in a brokenness of heart.

Imperfect broken groans, from a broken heart, God will accept.

An hard heart cannot pray; a broken heart is made up of prayer.

It is a comfort to Christians apart to think their prayers meet before a throne of grace; and that their persons shall meet before a throne of glory.

There wants nothing but a believing prayer to turn the promise into a performance.

God is a great God, and therefore he will be sought; he is a good God, and therefore he will be found.

When God pours out his spirit upon man, then will man pour out his heart before God.

Prayer doth not consist in the elegance of the phrase, but in the strength of the affection.

Where there is a willing heart, there will be a continual crying to heaven for help.

Pray that you may pray.

Waiting upon God continually will abate your unnecessary cares, and sweeten your necessary ones

God counts all the steps we take to the throne of grace, and all the minutes of our waiting.

Let nothing get between heaven and our prayer but Christ,

Prayer, if it be done as a task, is no prayer.

Sin quenches prayer, affliction quickens it.

The same spirit of faith which teaches a man to cry earnestly, teaches him to wait patiently; for as it assures him the mercy is in the Lord's hand, so it assures him it will be given forth in the Lord's time.

The breath of prayer comes from the life of faith.

Whatever you want, go to God by faith and prayer, in the name of Christ, and never think his delays are denials.

They who spend their days in faith and prayer, shall end their days in peace and comfort.

OF ETERNITY.

Look backwards, and time was when souls were not; look forwards, and our souls will be when time shall not.

Who will not deny himself for a time, that he may enjoy himself for ever?

What is the world to them that are in the grave, where our bodies must shortly be? Or to them that are in eternity, where our souls must shortly be?

Remember you are at the door of eternity, and have other work to do than to trifle away time; those hours which you spend in your closets, are the golden spots of all your time; and will have the sweetest influence on your last hours.

Our life is a passage to eternity; it ought to be a meditation of eternity and a preparation for eternity.

GRATIFICATION OF ANIMAL PROPENSITIES.

THE gratification of the animal propensities—commonly called the Appetites. These, which we possess in common with the lower animals, are implanted in us for important purposes; but they require to be kept under the most rigid control both of reason and the moral principle. When they are allowed to break through these restraints, and become leading principles of action, they form a character the lowest in the scale, whether intellectual or moral; and it is impossible to contemplate a more degraded condition of a rational and moral being. The consequences to society are also of the most baneful nature. Without alluding to the glutton or to the drunkard, what accumulated guilt, degradation, and wretchedness follow the course of the libertine,—blasting whatever comes within the reach of his influence, and extending a demoralizing power alike to him who inflicts and to those who suffer the wrong! Thus is constituted a class of evils, of which no human law can take any adequate cognizance, and which therefore raise our views, in a special and peculiar manner, to a Supreme Moral Governor.

DESIRE OF WEALTH.

THE desire of Wealth, commonly called Avarice; though avarice is perhaps justly to be regarded as the morbid excess or abuse of the propensity. This is properly to be considered as originating in the desire to possess the means of procuring other gratifications. But, by the influence of habit, the desire is transferred to the thing

itself; and it often becomes a kind of mania, in which there is the pure love of gain, without the application of it to any other kind of enjoyment. It is a propensity which may, in a remarkable manner, engross the whole character, acquiring strength by continuance; and it is then generally accompanied by a contracted selfishness, which considers nothing as mean or unworthy that can be made to contribute to the ruling passion. This may be the case even when the propensity is regulated by the rules of justice; if it break through this restraint, it leads to fraud, extortion, deceit and injustice,—and, under another form, to theft or robbery. It is therefore always in danger of being opposed to the exercise of the benevolent affections, leading a man to live for himself, and to study only the means calculated to promote his own interest.

DESIRE OF POWER.

THE desire of Power, or Ambition. This is the love of ruling,—of giving the law to a circle whether more or less extensive. When it becomes the governing propensity, the strongest principles of human nature give way before it,—even those of personal comfort and safety. This we see in the conqueror, who braves every danger, difficulty, and privation, for the attainment of power; and in the statesman, who sacrifices for it every personal comfort, perhaps health and peace. The principle, however, assumes another form, which, according to its direction, may aim at a higher object. Such is the desire of exercising power over the minds of men; of persuading a multitude, by arguments or eloquence, to deeds of usefulness;

of pleading the cause of the oppressed ; a power of influencing the opinions of others, and of guiding them into sound sentiments and virtuous conduct. This is a species of power, the most gratifying by far to an exalted and virtuous mind, and one calculated to carry benefit to others wherever it is exerted.

DESIRE OF SOCIETY.

THE desire of Society. This has been considered by most writers on the subject as a prominent principle of human nature, showing itself at all periods of life, and in all conditions of civilization. In persons shut up from intercourse with their fellow-men, it has manifested itself in the closest attachment to animals ; as if the human mind could not exist without some object on which to exercise the feelings intended to bind man to his fellows. It is found in the union of men in civil society and social intercourse,—in the ties of friendship, and the still closer union of the domestic circle. It is necessary for the exercise of all the affections ; and even our weaknesses require the presence of other men. There would be no enjoyment of rank or wealth, if there were none to admire ; and even the misanthrope requires the presence of another to whom his spleen may be uttered. The abuse of this principle leads to the contracted spirit of party.

DESIRE OF KNOWLEDGE.

THE desire of Knowledge, or of Intellectual Acquirement,—including the principle of Curiosity. The tendency of this high principle must depend

on its regulation, and the objects to which it is directed. These may vary from the idle tattle of the day, to the highest attainments in literature and science. The principle may be applied to pursuits of a frivolous or useless kind, and to such acquirements as lead only to pedantry or sophism; or it may be directed to a desultory application, which leads to a superficial acquaintance with a variety of subjects, without a correct knowledge of any of them. On the other hand, the pursuit of knowledge may be allowed to interfere with important duties which we owe to others, in the particular situation in which we are placed. A well-regulated judgment conducts the propensity to worthy objects; and directs it in such a manner as to make it most useful to others. With such due regulations, the principle ought to be carefully cultivated in the young. It is closely connected with that activity of mind which seeks for knowledge on every subject that comes within its reach, and which is ever on the watch to make its knowledge more correct and more extensive.

DESIRE OF MORAL IMPROVEMENT.

THE desire of Moral Improvement. This leads to the highest state of man; and it bears this peculiar character, that it is adapted to men in every scale of society, and tends to diffuse a beneficial influence around the circle with which the individual is connected. The desire of power may exist in many, but its gratification is limited to a few: he who fails may become a discontented misanthrope; and he who succeeds may be a scourge to his species. The desire of superi-

erity or of praise may be misdirected in the same manner, leading to insolent triumph on the one hand, and envy on the other. Even the thirst for knowledge may be abused, and many are placed in circumstances in which it cannot be gratified. But the desire of moral improvement commends itself to every class of society, and its object is attainable by all. In proportion to its intensity and its steadiness, it tends to make the possessor both a happier and a better man, and to render him the instrument of diffusing happiness and usefulness to all who come within the reach of his influence. If he be in a superior station, these results will be felt more extensively; if he be in an humble sphere, they may be more limited; but their nature is the same, and their tendency is equally to elevate the character of man. This mental condition consists, as we shall afterward have occasion to show more particularly, in an habitual recognition of the supreme authority of conscience over the whole intellectual and moral system, and in an habitual effort to have every desire and every affection regulated by the moral principle and by a sense of the Divine will. It leads to a uniformity of character which can never flow from any lower source, and to a conduct distinguished by the anxious discharge of every duty, and the practice of the most active benevolence.

PATRIOTISM.

PATRIOTISM is, perhaps, not properly to be considered as a distinct principle of our nature; but rather as the result of a combination of the other affections. It leads us, by every means in our

power, to promote the peace and prosperity of our country,—and to discourage, to the utmost of our ability, whatever tends to the contrary. Every member of the community has something in his power in this respect. He may set an example, in his own person, of dutiful and loyal respect to the first authority, of strict obedience to the laws and respectful submission to the institutions of his country. He may oppose the attempts of factious individuals to sow among the ignorant the seeds of discontent, tumult, or discord. He may oppose and repress attempts to injure the revenue of the state; may aid in the preservation of public tranquillity, and in the execution of public justice. Finally, he may zealously exert himself in increasing the knowledge and improving the moral habits of the people,—two of the most important means by which the conscientious man, in any rank of life, may aid in conferring a high and permanent benefit on his country.

INFLUENCE OF HABIT ON CHARACTER.

THE principle of Habit holds a most important place in the moral condition of every man; and it applies equally to any species of conduct, or any train of mental operations, which, by frequent repetition, have become so familiar as not to be accompanied by a recognition of the principles from which they originally sprang. In this manner good habits are continued without any immediate sense of the right principles by which they were formed; but they arose from a frequent and uniform acting upon these principles, and on this is founded the moral approbation which we

attach to habits of this description. In the same manner habits of vice, and habits of inattention to any class of duties, are perpetuated without a sense of the principles and affections which they violate ; but this arose from a frequent violation of these principles, and a frequent repulsion of these affections, until they gradually lost their power over the conduct ; and in this consists the guilt of habits. Thus, one person acquires habits of benevolence, veracity, and kindness,—of minute attention to his various duties,—of correct mental discipline, and active direction of his thoughts to all those objects of attention which ought to engage a well-regulated mind : another sinks into habits of listless vacuity or frivolity of mind,—of vicious indulgence and contracted selfishness,—of neglect of important duties, disregard to the feelings of others, and total indifference to all those considerations and pursuits which claim the highest regard of every responsible being ; and the striking fact is, that, after a certain period, all this may go on without a feeling that aught is wrong either in the moral condition or the state of mental discipline : such is the power of a moral habit.

The important truth, therefore, is deserving of the deepest and most habitual attention, that character consists in a great measure in habits,—and that habits arise out of individual actions and individual operations of the mind. Hence the importance of carefully weighing every action of our lives, and every train of thought that we encourage in our minds ; for we never can determine the effect of a single act, or a single mental process, in giving that influence to the character, or to the moral condition, the result of which

shall be decisive and permanent. In the whole history of habits, indeed, we see a wondrous display of that remarkable order of sequences which has been established in our mental constitution, and by which every man becomes, in an important sense, the master of his own moral destiny. For each act of virtue tends to make him more virtuous ;—and each act of vice gives new strength to an influence within, which will certainly render him more and more vicious.

These considerations have a practical tendency of the utmost interest. In subduing habits of an injurious character, the laws of mental sequences, which have now been referred to, must be carefully acted upon. When the judgment, influenced by the indications of conscience, is convinced of the injurious nature of the habit, the attention must be steadily and habitually directed to this impression. There will thus arise desire to be delivered from the habit,—or, in other words, to cultivate the course of action that is opposed to it. This desire, being cherished in the mind, is then made to bear upon every individual case in which a propensity is felt towards particular actions, or particular mental processes, referable to the habit. The new inclination is first acted upon with an effort, but, after every instance of success, less effort is required, until at length the new course of action is confirmed, and overpowers the habit to which it was opposed. But that this result may take place, it is necessary that the mental process be followed in the manner distinctly indicated by the philosophy of the moral feelings : for, if this is not attended to, the expected effect may not follow, even under circumstances which appear, at first sight, most likely to produce it.

On this principle we are to explain the fact, that bad habits may be long suspended by some powerful extrinsic influence, while they are in no degree broken. Thus, a person addicted to intemperance will bind himself by an oath to abstain, for a certain time, from intoxicating liquors. In an instance which has been related to me, an individual under this process observed the most rigid sobriety for five years,—but was found in a state of intoxication the very day after the period of abstinence expired. In such a case the habit is suspended by the mere influence of the oath; but the desire continues unsubdued, and resumes all its former power whenever this artificial restraint is withdrawn. The effect is the same as if the man had been in confinement during the period, or had been kept from his favourite indulgence by some other restraint entirely of an external kind: the gratification was prevented, but his moral nature continued unchanged.

CORRECTION OF HABIT.

THERE is indeed a point in this downward course, where the habit has acquired undisputed power, and the whole moral feelings yield to it unresisting submission. Peace may then be within, but that peace is the stillness of death; and, unless a voice from heaven shall wake the dead, the moral being is lost. But, in the progress towards this fearful issue, there may be a tumult, and a contest, and a strife; and the voice of conscience may still command a certain attention to its warnings. While there are these indications of life, there is yet hope of the man; but, on each moment is now suspended his moral exist-

ence. Let him retire from the influence of external things; and listen to that voice within, which, though often unheeded, still pleads for God. Let him call to aid those high truths which relate to the presence and inspection of this Being of infinite purity, and the solemnities of a life which is to come. Above all, let him look up in humble supplication to that pure and holy One, who is the witness of this warfare,—who will regard it with compassion, and impart his powerful aid. But let him not presumptuously rely on this aid, as if the victory were already secured. The contest is but begun; and there must be a continued effort and an unceasing watchfulness,—an habitual direction of the attention to those truths which, as moral causes, are calculated to act upon the mind,—and a constant reliance upon the power from on high which is felt to be real and indispensable. With all this provision, his progress may be slow; for the opposing principle, and the influence of established moral habits, may be felt contending for their former dominion: but, by each advantage that is achieved over them, their power will be broken and finally destroyed. Now in all this contest towards the purity of the moral being, each step is no less a process of the mind itself than the downward course by which it was preceded. It consists in a surrender of the will to the suggestions of conscience, and an habitual direction of the attention to those truths which are calculated to act upon the moral volitions. In this course, the man feels that he is authorized to look for a might and an influence not his own. This is no imaginary or mysterious impression, which one may fancy that he feels, and then pass on contented with the vision;

but a power which acts through the healthy operations of his own mind ; it is in his own earnest exertions, as a rational being, to regulate these operations, that he is warranted to expect its communication ; and it is in feeling these assuming the characters of moral health that he has the proof of its actual presence.

And where is the improbability that the pure and holy One who framed the wondrous moral being may thus hold intercourse with it, and impart an influence in its hour of deepest need. According to the utmost of our conceptions, it is the highest of his works,—for he has endowed it with powers of rising to the contemplation of himself, and with the capacity of aspiring to the imitation of his own moral perfections. We cannot, for a moment, doubt that his eye must reach its inmost movements, and that all its emotions, and desires, and volitions are exposed to his view. We must believe that he looks with displeasure when he perceives them wandering from himself ; and contemplates with approbation the contest, when the spirit strives to throw off its moral bondage, and to fight its way upwards to a conformity to his will. Upon every principle of sound philosophy, all this must be open to his inspection ; and we can perceive nothing opposed to the soundest inductions of reason in the belief, that he should impart an influence to the feeble being in this high design, and conduct him to its accomplishment. In all this, in fact, there is so little improbability, that we find it impossible to suppose it could be otherwise. We find it impossible to believe that such a mental process could go on without the knowledge of him whose presence is in every place,—or that, looking upon it,

he should want either the power or the willingness to impart his effectual aid.

A BEAUTIFUL CONTRAST.

THAT "man is born to trouble" is inscribed on every living and material thing. We see and feel it in the frailty and struggle for existence in infancy, and in the thousand "ills to which our flesh is heir;" we see it in the rivalry and animosity which tear asunder the hearts of our youth; we hear it in the notes of murmuring in our streets, in the dungeon of the criminal, and in the asylum of the outcast; in our nurseries of knowledge, and many a domestic fireside; and the very breeze, if we listen to it, seems to catch and repeat the sound, as if from ten thousand voices, "man is born to trouble." To all these, Christianity proffers a full and efficient remedy. And at the hour of death; that last mysterious event, from thoughts of which we shrink with an instinctive shuddering; when the soul is hovering on the confines of two worlds; when man is suffering, it may be, the agony of physical pain and the remorse of an accusing conscience; how indispensable are then its solaces and sublimer hopes! Infidelity, at this dread hour, has nothing to proffer but the icy, appalling doctrine of *eternal sleep*. It can give no peace to the self-accusings within,—not even a momentary respite. Fiend-like, as it is, it would extinguish all those lights which cheer the fainting spirit, as she pursues her trembling way through "the dark valley of the shadow of death;" it would snatch the keys of death and the grave from Him who hath conquered both, and who holds them as trophies

of the victory which he hath obtained ; it would conduct the dying man into the regions of eternal silence ; and bolting, irreversibly bolting, the gates of heaven against him, would there leave him to worms, decay, and oblivion !

TENDENCY TO RELIGIOUS DELUSION.

I HAVE constantly remarked, that those who, in the beginning of their religious course, are drawn from the paths of sobriety and truth, by some of those extravagancies and delusions that ever abound in the Church, however soon they may return from their first eccentricities, will go off again on the first temptation, and very late, if at all, become what may properly be called steady characters in religion. I never saw a mind strongly possessed with one error, that was not ready to receive any other, though it should be totally unconnected, and even irreconcilable with its former favourite. This predisposition of the mind to be misled, is like the ague, and other intermittent diseases, which, having once got possession of the constitution, return whenever it is brought within the influence of a certain atmosphere. It has its hot fits, when it is sure of every thing, and its cold fits, when it is sure of nothing ; but it is never safe and sober, "rooted and grounded in the faith." This is so remarkably the case, that when any new views and strange doctrines are brought before a community, a practised observer may guess with tolerable accuracy who will and who will not receive them. Can parents and teachers be too careful how they suffer the spiritual constitutions of their children to imbibe so

unhealthy a tone? or expose them to persons, who, totally disregarding the Apostle's distinction of administering milk to babes, and strong meat to men, are carrying into the very nursery, into the schools of children, and the cottages of the poor, views and notions, that if they are not rank poison, are most indigestible and unwholesome food; and if they do not destroy the soul, will give it a distaste for the simplicity of divine truth, and the plain language of the written Word.

VAIN CURIOSITY.

A mouse that had lived all his life in a chest, says the fable, chanced one day to creep up to the edge, and, peeping out, exclaimed with wonder—"I did not think the world was so large!"

The first step to knowledge, is, to know that we are ignorant. It is a great point to know our place: for want of this, a man in private life, instead of attending to the affairs in his "chest," is ever peeping out, and then he becomes a philosopher! he must then know every thing, and presumptuously pry into the deep and secret councils of God—not considering that man is finite, and has no faculties to comprehend and judge of the great scheme of things. We can form no other idea of the dispensations of God, nor can we have any knowledge of spiritual things, except what God has taught us in his word; and, where he stops, we must stop. He has not told us why he permitted the angels to fall—why he created Adam—why he suffered sin to enter into the world—why Christ came in the latter ages—when he will come to judgment—what will be

the doom of the Heathen nations—nor why our state throughout eternity, was made to depend on such a moment as man's life; all these are secrets of his council. "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" God urges it on us again and again, that Sin *has* entered—and that we must "flee from the wrath to come." Christ, in the days of his flesh, never gratified curiosity: he answered every inquiry according to the spirit of the inquirer, not according to the letter of the inquiry: if any man came in humility for instruction, he always instructed; but, when any came to gratify a vain curiosity, he answered, as when one said, "Lord, are there few that be saved?"—"Strive to enter in at the strait gate!"—or, as when another inquired, "Lord, and what shall this man do?"—"What is that to thee? follow thou me."

I HATE VAIN THOUGHTS.

GUARD well thy thoughts, for they are heard in heaven. All the elementary principles of moral conduct may be found in the thoughts—they are the seeds of action—the faint lineaments of good or evil—the ground-work of the whole picture of human life. The whole current of mortality flows from these little fountains, which retire inwardly, until lost in the secret chambers of mind and perception. The wretch that trembles before the bar of insulted justice, who is horror-struck while faithful witnesses are developing his turpitude, and while he expects from the lips of the judge the sentence of the law which has no ears to listen to his supplications, may trace back all his guilt and wretchedness to his

thoughts. The murderer ; whose hands have been stained with the blood of his fellow-man, who pitied not the cries of his victim when about to strike the last fatal blow, and who survived his deed of death only to die more hideously, first by the gnawings of his own conscience, and then by the stern hand of retributive justice, may thank his thoughts for all this horrid consummation. He who has linked crime with crime, making one enormity necessary to cover another, until he has passed a concatenation of revolting atrocities, may find the first link of the chain in his thoughts. The apostate from his God, who once carried a high profession, and seemed to outstrip the foremost in zeal and diligence ; but who now grovels in vice, and finds his companions among the groundlings of sensuality, the scandal of his profession, and the grief of his friends, may find the commencement of his infamy and defection in his thoughts. Ye candidates for immortality, "How long shall your vain thoughts lodge within you ?"

ASSURANCE.

THERE are often calm, fair days without storm, though it be not so clear sunshine ; and in such days a man may travel comfortably. I would have Christians called off from a perplexing overpressing of this point of their particular assurance. If we were more studious to please God, forgetting ourselves, we should find him remember us the more ; yet we should not do so for this neither, but simply for himself. In a word, this is thy wisdom ; mind thy duty and refer to him thy comfort.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVATIONS.

As rivers and fountains proceed from the sea, and return thither again; so true grace in the heart, as a fountain, sends forth all its streams towards God, the ocean from whence it flowed.

Christian graces are like perfumes; the more they are prest, the sweeter they smell; like stars that shine brightest in the dark; like trees, the more they are shaken, the deeper root they take, and the more fruit they bear.

As snow is of itself cold, yet warms and refreshes the earth; so afflictions, though in themselves grievous, yet keep the soul of the Christian warm, and make it fruitful.

The casting down of our spirits in true humility, is but like throwing a ball on the ground, which makes it rebound the higher towards heaven.

As worldly joys end in sorrow, so godly sorrow ends in joy.

As it sometimes rains when the sun shines; so there may be joy in a saint's heart when there are tears in his eyes.

Confession of sin should come like water from a spring that runs freely; and not like water from a still, that is forced by the fire of affliction.

As the way to stop bleeding, is by opening a vein, so the way to stop unreasonable sorrow is to turn it against sin.

Sin is like a bee, with honey in its mouth, but a sting in its tail.

Many a man shifts his sins as men do their clothes; they put off one to put on another: this is but waiting upon the devil in a new livery.

The pleasure of sin is like a draught of sweet poison.

As the fly, that plays about the candle, doth often burn its wings at last ; so the Christian that parleys with temptations is in danger of having the wings of his soul so shortened by the fiery darts of the devil, that he will not be able to rise again towards heaven, till God shall give him renewed affections.

As Noah's dove could find no rest for the sole of her foot, so the spirit of God can find no residence in that heart which is deluged in sin.

Our conscience is a fire within us, our sins as the fuel ; therefore, instead of warming, it will scorch us ; unless the fuel be removed, or the heat of it allayed by penitential tears.

All true Christians must be like Noah's ark, that was pitched within and without. They must have a holy inside, and a holy outside ; their profession and practice must agree together.

They that are professors only, and make a show for sinister ends, are like Orpah ; in times of affliction they will kiss their mother and be gone ; they will soon take leave of the church of God. But they that are true Christians, are like Ruth ; they will cleave to her, stay by her, live and die with her, and never depart from her.

As it is not putting on a gown that makes a scholar, but the inward habits of the mind ; so it is not putting on an outward cloak of profession, that makes a Christian, but the inward grace of the heart.

As Noah's dove found no footing but in the ark ; so a Christian finds no contentment but in Christ.

Our hearts are like instruments of music well tuned ; they will make no melody in the ear of

God, unless they be gently touched by the finger of the spirit.

Christians' hearts are as iron; if they be once made hot with the love of God, they will more easily be joined together in love to one another.

As the sun ripens and sweetens fruit by shining upon them, without which they would be sour and unsavoury; so it is the sunshine of God's love and favour that sweetens all earthly blessings, without which they would be but crosses and curses to them that possess them.

God's mercies are as cords to draw us to him; but our sins are as sharp as swords that cut those cords.

Outward comforts are like the rotten twigs of a tree; they may be touched, but if they are trusted to, or rested upon, they will certainly deceive and fail us.

As cankers breed in the sweetest roses, so pride may arise out of the sweetest duties.

A zealous soul without meekness, is like a ship in a storm, in danger of wrecks. A meek soul, without zeal, is like a ship in a calm, that moves not so fast to its harbour as it ought.

SERIOUS ADVICE TO YOUTH.

CHOOSE God for your portion; remember that he is the only happiness of a rational and immortal soul. The soul that was made for God can find no happiness but in God; it came from God, and can never be happy but by returning to him again, and resting in him. "Arise, for this is not your rest." "If ye be then risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where

Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth ; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

God is all-sufficient ; get him for your portion and you have all ; then you have infinite wisdom to direct you, infinite knowledge to teach you, infinite mercy to pity and save you, infinite love to care for and comfort you, and infinite power to protect and keep you. If God be yours, all his attributes are yours ; all his creatures, all his works of Providence, shall do you good, as you have need of them. He is an eternal, full, satisfactory portion. He is an ever-living, ever-loving, ever-present friend ; and without him you are a cursed creature in every condition, and all things will work against you.

Consider, that by nature you are dead in trespasses and sin ; a child of wrath, a stranger and enemy to God ; and while such, the thoughts of God are terrible to you : you can expect nothing from him but wrath and everlasting burnings. God is ever angry with the wicked : his holiness hates all sin ; his all-seeing eye beholds it, and his justice will punish it.

While you are in a state of nature, you can do nothing but sin. Every thing is a snare, and a wicked heart is apt to be taken. Labour to be sensible of this, and let the sinfulness of your nature be your greatest burden. Strive and labour against this principally. Get purity of heart, and a holy life will follow upon it ; but if you strive only against outward acts of sin, while your heart is let alone, your labour will be in vain, your heart will tire you out ; or if it doth not, yet remember, that God's eye is in the heart, and he hath pro-

vided a hell for hypocrites. Nothing more damnable than a wicked unrenewed heart.

Consider, that Christ alone is your way to God. Justification, pardon, and acceptance with God, are by faith in him alone. Sanctification, and a new nature, are by the power of his spirit alone. Let Christ therefore be precious to your souls. Labour for true faith in him. Take him for your Lord and Saviour; submit to his commands in all things; and rest your soul upon him alone for reconciliation, and peace with God. Open your heart to the motions of his spirit; welcome that principle of a holy and divine life, and be sure to improve his motions, follow his drawings, and by no means grieve him.

Be speedy in your repentance, and diligent in your endeavours after holiness. Know the time of God's gracious visitation. While God is calling, Christ inviting, the gate of heaven set open, the ministers of the word exhorting, and the spirit drawing, make haste and delay not.

Consider your life is but short, and altogether uncertain. To defer one day may be to your everlasting undoing. When your life is once gone, it will be in vain to think of repenting. You shall then have no more sermons, no more offers of Christ and grace. God will be patient no more. And if God should take away your life to-morrow, you would perish inexcusably for refusing his grace to-day. One offer of grace refused, renders a sinner inexcusable, though God should never offer his mercy more. O, trifle not with your soul! be not careless of eternal happiness. You have heaven and hell, life and death before you, and it depends upon your own hearty choice, which shall be your portion: and

they are chosen by the choice of the way which leads to them. Choose life, and choose it speedily. And remember once again, that you have but one life to choose in. Trifle not away this moment, upon which depends eternity: mispend not your short time to your eternal loss.

Stand not upon a short labour, difficulty, self-denial, or suffering, for your eternal happiness. God would have you saved: Christ hath died for you to reconcile you to God: he is ascended into heaven to open a door for your soul to enter in at, and he is interceding with the Father for all grace and mercy for you, if you refuse him not.

"He came into the world to seek and to save that which is lost." Be sensible of your sinful, lost, damnable condition without him. O! make haste to your Saviour, yield to all his demands, and take him as offered in the gospel, in all his offices.

PROPER REFLECTIONS FOR AFFLICTED
SAINTS.

OUTWARD good things are no sign of God's special love. The sun of prosperity shines upon the brambles of the wilderness, as well as upon the flowers of the garden; and the snow of affliction falls upon the garden as well as upon the wilderness.

What though the streams of creature goodness run low with thee, so thou hast the more from the spring-head? There is more comfort in one drop that distils immediately from God, than from ten thousand rivers that flow from creature delights.

God doth sometimes on purpose show us the creature's emptiness, that we may go to his full

cisterns, that we may know him to be the fountain: and that we may feed more largely upon spiritual dainties, he does deny us carnal ones.

What though God deny thee the earthly jewel, if he gives thee the heavenly crown?—if thou hast no portion here, thou shalt have a kingdom hereafter; and God is thy portion here, and so long thou shalt not want any good thing. Creature comforts at the best, and to the best, are only delightful, not satisfying; pleasant, not gainful!

What if thy friends forsake thee, so long as God (who is better than all) stand by thee?—Whatever enjoyment friends afford, that God does much more. Do they love thee? He died for thee. Do they pity thee in affliction? In all thy affliction he is afflicted. What wouldst thou have a friend for? For converse; O. taste and see how good and pleasant a thing it is to have communion with God! Hear (if thou canst, and not be ravished) the sweet voice, I am thine and thou art mine. O! feel the pantings of his heart, and hear the soundings of his bowels! Wouldst thou have a friend to pour out thy breast into? O! who is so fit for that as God? He will bear part of thy burden if thou art laden, or he will add new strength to sustain it—his love, his converse, his society, his life itself; and such a life is made up of nothing but sweetness and delight.

THE SEED-TIME OF SUPERSTITION.

THIS day (Childermas or Innocents' day,) puts me in mind of the great perplexity and uneasiness which I have perceived in many people, occasioned by the superstitious impressions made upon

their minds, by the tales of weak and ignorant people, *in their infancy*—a period when the tender mind is more apt to receive the impressions of error and vice, as well as those of truth and virtue; and, having once received either the one or the other, is likely to retain them, as long as it subsists in the body. How charitable a care is it, therefore, and how much the duty of every parent whom it hath pleased God to bless with a right understanding, with whatever improvement he can, to his children! To have at least as much care of them as a gardener has of a nice and delicate plant that he values, when he diligently shelters and defends it, from the pernicious assaults of storms and tempests and blasting winds, till a milder season and warmer sun puts it out of danger! With no less industry ought a kind parent to guard the tender mind of his child, from the hurtful notions, and superstitious conceits, of foolish, ignorant people; who, by senseless and impertinent tales, begin to plant errors and evil in the innocent soul, even from the cradle. It is in the nursery where miserably deluded and deluding wretches first sow those tares in the child, which it is ten to one if the grown-up man is ever able to root out. There, every simple creature, if not prevented, will be blotting the yet clear and unspotted soul, and sullying it with false lines, and foul characters; besmearing it, after their awkward manner, with horrid images of frightful sprites and hobgoblins, and painting upon it a thousand monstrous and terrific shapes of death, to make their future life miserably wretched. Thus with a barbarous folly they create, betimes, the most abhorring aversion in the mind, to that which Providence has ordained; and with a detestable

impiety sow in it the seeds of reluctance and contradiction to the wisdom, will, and unalterable decrees of the Almighty. So that when wiser people come to try their skill, they find their unhappy soul so bedaubed with these odious, hideous figures, that there is little room left for fairer and better impressions. Here is laid the groundwork of an erroneous judgment, and wrong understanding; and amongst other mischiefs that have here their beginning, are those very grievous ones of a timorous and superstitious spirit, apt to give credit to the luckiness or unluckiness of certain days, and to a thousand ominous whimsies and conceits, which as they are the unhappy offspring of weakness and ignorance, so are they the never enough to be detested parents of grief and misery, to those who are weak and wretched enough to be deluded by them. All these deplorable follies proceed from wrong and unworthy apprehensions of God's providence, in his care of man, and government of the world. For no reasonable creature can ever imagine that the all-wise God should inspire owls and ravens to hoot out the elegies of dying men; that he should have ordained a fatality in number, and inflicted punishment without an offence; and that the being one of a fatal number at a table, should, though contrary to no command, be a crime not to be expiated but by death! That even dogs, spiders, and candles, should have a foreknowledge of man's destiny! That certain days are unlucky, as if the good and virtuous were not, at all times and in all places, and in all numbers too, assured of the protection of the infinitely merciful God!

MORNING MEDITATION.

As soon as we awake, our hearts should be in heaven.—We should leave our hearts with God over night, that we may find them with God in the morning. We owe God the first fruit of our reason, before we think of other things—for every day is but the lesser circle of our lives. We should begin with God, before earthly things encroach upon us, and season our hearts with the thoughts of his holy presence.—That is the means to make the fear of God abide upon us all the day after—and thus to exercise our reason again upon Him, as some recompense for those hours spent in sleep, wherein we showed no act of thankfulness to Him.

PRACTICAL FAITH.

THE late king of Sweden was, as it seems, under great impressions of spiritual religion, some time before his death. A peasant being once, on a particular occasion, admitted to his presence, the king, knowing him to be a person of singular piety, asked him, "What he took to be the true nature of faith?" The peasant entered deeply into the subject, and much to the king's comfort and satisfaction. The king, at last, on his death-bed, had a return of his doubts and fears as to the safety of his soul; and still the same question was perpetually in his mouth, to those about him: "What is real faith?" His attendants advised him to send for the archbishop of Upsal; who, coming to the king's bed-side, began, in a learned, logical manner, to enter into the scholastic definition of faith. The prelate's disquisition lasted

an hour. When he had done, the king said with much energy, "All this is ingenious; but not comfortable: it is not what I want. *Nothing, after all, but the farmer's faith, will do for me.*"

SALVATION FREE.

It is this wherein the doctrine of salvation is mainly comfortable, that it is free. 'Ye are saved by grace.' It is true God requires faith, it is 'through faith,' but he that requires that gives it too: 'That is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.' It is wonderful grace to save upon believing; believe in Jesus for salvation and live accordingly, and it is done; there is no more required to thy pardon, but that thou receive it by faith. But truly nature cannot do this; it is as impossible for us of ourselves to believe as to do. This then, is that which makes it all grace, from beginning to end, that God not only saves upon believing, but gives believing itself. Christ is called not only the 'Author and Finisher of our salvation, but even of our faith.' As the free love and grace of God appointed the means and way of our peace, and offered it; so the same grace applies it, and makes it ours, and gives grace to apprehend it.

CHRIST IS HOLINESS.

CHRIST is to us not only as a perfect pattern, but as a powerful principle. It is really the Spirit of Christ in a believer that crucifies the world and purges out sin, and forms the soul to his likeness. It is impossible to be holy, not being in him; and being truly in him, it is as impossible not to be holy.

AFFLICTION.

"O affliction! when sent to instruct, thou becomest a deep and faithful casuist! Of many past transactions and present habits, I said, 'It is nothing:' or, 'It is settled.' Thou bringest the book again before me. What errors in the account! What blindness in the adjustment! Poor bankrupt! I said I was 'rich and increased in goods; and behold I am miserable and poor, and blind and naked.' Who is the man, that in health and spirits abounds in his own sense, and in self-satisfaction? He may perhaps live to learn that his God can make an affliction present such views in one day, as a whole life of contemplation and study would never have afforded. I now feel capable of instructing myself in former periods, as if I were talking to a giddy child. I feel ready to seize the arm of the silly wanderer on this and on that occasion, as one without a monitor or guide, and of saving it from its mad projects, and impoverishing habits. Who can estimate the value of such a monitor? But had I none? Ah how superior a one had I at all times to what I could now prove! O, slighted Bible! I feel—I feel that every deviation from the right way, every foolish and wicked thing which I have said or done, has been owing to a disregard of thy counsel; every misery and mischief into which I have fallen, has been through a neglect of thy warning! How true is that saying in my own experience, 'O that thou hadst hearkened unto me, then had thy peace been like a river!' What peace would now remain were it not for the Gospel? The ignorance and unbelief of the multitude may cause them to pass it as a barren rock; I, like a travel-

ler overtaken by a storm, am glad to flee to it, and be safe; and entering in, I find honey, one drop of which exceeds the world's highest enjoyments. I feel this is the grand secret for obtaining peace in a world of sin and sorrow. When the heart turns away from the confusions and disturbances to which it is continually exposed, and taking wings flies to the bosom of God; when the voice of Christ walking in the night on the troubled waters, is heard, 'It is I, be not afraid;' this is peace. And this too is his own direction for obtaining it, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation; but, in me ye shall have peace. Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.'"

DARK FROM EXCESS OF LIGHT.

"You teach," said the Emperor Trajan to Rabbi Joshua, "that your God is everywhere, and boast that he resides among your nation: I should like to see him." "God's presence is indeed everywhere," replied Joshua, "but he cannot be seen: no mortal eye can behold his glory." The emperor insisted. "Well," said Joshua, "suppose we try to look first at some of his ambassadors?" The emperor consented. The Rabbi took him in the open air at noonday, and bid him look at the sun in its meridian splendour. "I cannot," said Trajan, "the light dazzles me." "Thou art unable," said Joshua, "to endure the light of one of his creatures, and canst thou expect to behold the resplendent glory of the Creator? Would not such a sight annihilate you?"

CHARACTER.

IN society, character is the first, second, and the ultimate quality. A man is never ruined who has not lost his character, while he who has lost character, whatever be his position, is ruined as to moral and useful purposes. Envy and calumny will follow a man's success like his shadow ; but they will be powerless, if he is true to himself, and relies on his native energies to beat or live them down.—Virtues may be misrepresented, but they are virtues still ; and in vain will an industrious man be called an idler ; a sensible man a fool ; a prudent man a spendthrift ; a persevering man a changeling ; or an honest man a knave. The qualities are inherent, and cannot be removed by words, except by a man's own consent. At the same time all calumniators, thrice detected, ought to be banished as criminals, unworthy of the benefits of the society of which, however powerless, they endeavour to be the pest and bane.

BEWARE OF COVETOUSNESS.

COVETOUSNESS is a vice that not only hardens the heart, and contracts the understanding, but it dries up the streams of benevolence and charity, and totally unfits a man for the social state.

Consider it in connexion with death and eternity. No individual of the human family is exempt from death. It is a debt which all must pay. Death is a most formidable foe. His power is irresistible—his attack cannot be repelled, nor can we elude his pursuit. Money can procure you no shelter from this terrible adversary. You cannot bribe the king of terrors ; you cannot

purchase a covenant with the grave. If the bribe were offered, it would be broken. Death will strip you of all your possessions. He will be alike regardless of their glory and their extent.

But how awful is the condition of a covetous man in relation to futurity ! God is the supreme good ; and his favour and service should be esteemed the highest good and end. But the covetous man makes money his supreme good, and its acquisition the chief end of his being. He puts it, therefore, in the place of God. He becomes an idolater ; and in a future world will have his portion with murderers and liars, "in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone."

If there be a word of truth in the New Testament, some preparation is necessary for a future state. But what leisure has an avaricious man to prepare for eternity, when every moment of his time that can be spared, from the seasons allotted to refreshment and repose, is occupied in the pursuit of wealth, and the energies of his mind entirely bent on its acquisition ?

Can the love of an infinite being have any place in his bosom ! Can there be any delight in God, when all his moral perfections are in direct opposition to this degrading and criminal passion ! Can there be any aspirations after heaven, any desire or relish for its pleasures and pursuits, or any efforts made to lay up treasure there, when the whole soul is fixed on the accumulation of riches, in the present state ? Can a man love God or worship his Maker, when he adores an earthen idol, and bows down at his feet ? Nothing can be more opposite than these courses of action ; and nothing more contrary to one another, than the happiness of heaven and the love

of money. In short, to use the emphatic and impressive language of Scripture, "the love of money is the root of all evil."

The indulgence of this sinful propensity deprives a man not only of present happiness, but of future felicity. Are there any covetous persons amongst our readers? If so, we would thus address them. Remember that the very earth disowns you, society expels you from its bosom; enshrouded as you are in the darkness of your selfishness, the rays of humanity do not light upon you; much less can the beams of that glory in which the Deity resides, ever illumine or cheer your solitary and desolate spirits!

HOURS HAVE WINGS.

HOURS have wings, and fly up to the Author of time, and carry news of our usage. All our prayers cannot entreat one of them either to return or slacken his pace. The misspending of every minute is a new record against us in heaven: sure if we thought thus, we would dismiss them with better report, and not suffer them to go away empty, or laden with dangerous intelligence. How happy were it, that every hour should convey up, not only the message, but the fruit of good, and stay with the Ancient of Days to speak of us before his glorious throne.

THE VALUE OF RELIGION.

SIR HUMPHRY DAVY, who died in 1829, was one of the first philosophers of the age. Born in poverty, in an obscure corner of England, he

raised himself by industry and merit, unaided by friends, to such distinction that he was chosen, at the age of twenty-two, to fill the chair of Chemistry at the Royal Institution in London. A few years afterwards he placed himself in the chair of the Royal Society of London, and at the head of the chemists of Europe. The testimony of such a man on the subject of religion must be acknowledged by all, to be most valuable. It is as follows :

"I envy (says he) no quality of the mind or intellect in others ; not genius, power, wit, or fancy ; but if I could choose what would be most delightful, and I believe most useful to me, I should prefer a firm religious belief to every other blessing."

Equally valuable is the testimony of Sir Isaac Newton in favour of the truth of revelation. When Dr. Halley ventured once to say something in his presence disrespectful to religion, Newton silenced him, saying, "I have studied these things ; you have not !" How many an infidel would be silenced, if he would but suffer reason and modesty to whisper in his ear, "Newton studied these things ; you have not !"

RELIGIOUS RETIREMENT.

If we look back on the usual course of our feelings, we shall find that we are more influenced by the frequent recurrence of objects, than by their weight and importance ; and that habit has more force in forming our characters, than our opinions have. The mind naturally takes its turn and complexion from what it habitually con-

templates. Hence it is, that the world, by constantly pressing upon our senses, and being ever open to our view, takes so wide a sway in the heart. How, then, must we correct this influence, and by faith overcome the world, unless we habitually turn our attention to religion and eternity? Let us make them familiar with our minds, and mingle them with the ordinary stream of our thoughts; retiring often from the world, and conversing with God and our own souls. In these solemn moments, nature, and the shifting scenes of it, will retire from our view, and we shall feel ourselves left alone with God. We shall walk, as in his sight: we shall stand, as it were, at his tribunal. Illusions will then vanish apace, and every thing will appear in its true proportion and proper colour. We shall estimate human life and the worth of it, not by fleeting and momentary sensations, but by the light of serious reflection and steady faith. We shall see little in the past to please, or in the future to flatter. Its feverish dreams will subside, and its enchantments be dissolved.

From these seasons of retirement and religious meditation, we shall return to the active scenes of life with greater advantage. From the presence of God we shall come forth with our passions more composed, our thoughts better regulated, and our hearts more steady and pure. Let us not imagine that the benefit of such exercises is confined to the moments which are spent in them; for as the air retains the smell, and is filled with the fragrance of leaves which have been long shed, so will these meditations leave a sweet and refreshing influence behind them.

FASTIDIOUS HEARERS.

THEY are guilty of despising the word of God.

Oh! no, they say, far be that from us. This is a false charge. All honour be done to the word of God; we esteem it highly. Don't you hear now what we are complaining about? It is the man, and his disqualifications for his office, and his disagreeable manners.

Be that so. Yet, out of thine own mouth will I judge thee. You value the Gospel; I believe it, and you would not for any thing worship in a house where the word of God is handled deceitfully. You love sound doctrine sincerely; but you never find a preacher who can satisfy you for any length of time. There is always something wanting, and you can never get a man of the right stamp. Now suppose there is a prisoner who has forfeited his life: he is convicted, and his sentence is pronounced. The day of his execution comes, and he expects with every moment to see the door of the cell opened, and himself called to the place of execution. The door opens, and in comes a deputy from the governor to offer him pardon and liberty. The prisoner professes to be exceedingly delighted with the message, but he very much objects to the bearer of the message. He is a man of no consequence, or he is hardly able to deliver his message in a becoming manner. Instead of rising up and getting out from his dungeon, the prisoner is all the time dwelling upon the disqualifications of the deputy, and wonders why a man of more talent and higher standing has not been sent to him. He is reminded of the graciousness of the message, and his obligation to esteem and value it, and to over-

look those unimportant matters. O yes, he replies, I know the message is valuable indeed, and I have it in all honour; but why is the pardon not printed on parchment, &c. &c. And so he goes on, never leaving his prison, but quarrelling without cessation about the minor and unessential circumstances of the case. Another committee is sent to him, and another still, and every thing possible is done to suit his taste; but in vain. He complains, and will not be satisfied. And now, who will say, that man had a realizing sense of the value of the pardon offered to him? Is not his fault-finding spirit the most decisive testimony against him, and will he ever persuade you, while he remains in this condition, that he has any proper regard either for those who procured for him the offer of pardon, or for the offer itself? Certainly not. The application is easy. And, that the case is analogous, I appeal to your own observation and experience. Tell me whether the most devoted Christians are not the easiest to be satisfied, as it regards the manner and form in which the word of God is delivered, provided they are not positively objectionable, and injurious to the effects of divine truth. And is not each of you more likely to be pleased in proportion as you are in a devotional and humble frame, and is it not the pride of our heart, and the distraction of our mind, which lead us to nearly all the severe remarks, and the murmuring and complaining, about the exercises of the sanctuary?

A QUESTION OF THE FRIENDS.

THE Society of Friends have a query which is directed to be answered yearly by their meetings,

the object of which is, to incite the members to an examination, whether a larger portion of their time and attention is not devoted to the pursuits of business, than is consistent with the duties they owe to their Creator, and to civil and religious society.

"Are Friends careful to keep to moderation, in their trade or business?"

The more I reflect on the nature and constitution of man, his ultimate destiny, and the strong bias he has to become engrossed with temporal cares, the more wise and salutary this question appears. The world is going on at a rapid rate, some would say, in a course of improvement, but in this I am not so clear. However, every thing now is to be done on a grand scale; and what would once have been considered a large and profitable business, is now looked upon as a petty, contemptible concern, scarcely worth attending to. The great object seems to be to compress the business of a lifetime into the short space of a month or a year; and to buy and sell as much as possible in a given period of time. Other things keep pace with this enormous extension of business; spacious stores and dwelling houses must be rented or bought, horses and carriages must be kept, and families brought up in a style of living commensurate with the commercial importance which the masters of them assume. Extravagance and waste are the necessary concomitants of such a state of things; and it is not at all improbable, that *want* will by and by thrust herself into the company.

"*Moderation in trade or business,*" does not now mean what was once understood by it; but is taken to signify as large a business as a man

can conduct *profitably*, by devoting himself to it with all the diligence and alacrity of which he is capable; and the more money he makes, the more fully he is satisfied that he is really doing a very prudent, safe, and moderate business. If you mark the steady, persevering vigilance with which every opening for money-making is watched, the care and anxiety engraven on the countenance, the quick business step, the adroitness and management in driving a bargain, the rising up early and lying down late, with which many pursue their avocations, a stranger would surely be ready to conclude that such men consider it better to lose their own souls, than not to become rich, and that merchandise and money-making are to be their employment for eternity. Young men are immersed in the pursuit of business as soon as they are capable of taking part in it, and are brought up to consider it as the great concern of life. Inured to the store or counting-house, or the market, their ideas become circumscribed by the narrow limits of money calculation; and when the period of lawful age emancipates them from the thralldom to others, it is only to plunge as deeply into it on their own account. I have often mourned over young men of excellent mental endowments, cultivated minds and considerable religious sensibility, who by this system of training have been lost to religious society, and indeed to every other useful and benevolent purpose; given up soul and body to the service of mammon. It would be well if some of the elder and middle aged members of society would seriously and impartially put this query to themselves, whether their pursuit of business is in moderation, or whether it does not engross their

affections and attention to a degree which renders religion and religious concerns insipid and irksome. I fear this is too much the case, even with some who make profession of religion, but whose conduct and converse out of the meetings, evince that their affections are not set on things above, nor are their hearts and treasures in heaven. If ever we are favoured to see a revival, to behold a return of the zeal and devotedness, the ardent piety and love to God and man which distinguished our predecessors, we must be weaned from the world and its pursuits, have our hearts and affections transferred from earth to heaven, and become as fervent in spirit serving the Lord, as we are now active and zealous in the accumulation of estates, for ourselves and our children. To be diligent in business is proper and commendable, but it was for higher purposes that we were created. To serve and glorify our Creator, to do good to his creation, and honour him with our substance, by devoting it to promoting the comfort and happiness of our fellow-creatures, as stewards of Him "whose is the earth and all the fullness thereof," are the great objects for which we have our existence: and if we keep them steadily in view, as our *primary aim*, as the great business and concern of life, we should be far less exclusively devoted to the promotion of our own ease and pleasure, and to the acquisition of wealth. Instead of the spacious and splendid mansions which we are preparing or occupying, as though our home and heaven were here, we should be content with that simple manner of life which, while it embraces real comfort and convenience, involves far less expense and trouble, and more nearly comports with the self-denial and simplicity

of an humble Christian. Our time and talents would be primarily devoted to our Lord and Master, and so ardent and earnest would be our desire to discharge the duty we owe him, that in the strong and forcible language of scripture, "It would be our meat and our drink to do his will." If we contrast the short and uncertain period of human life, with the endless duration of eternity, and consider how little beyond food and raiment we can enjoy while here, that the surplus will be of no use to us in the world whither we are hastening, and that riches left to children often prove a curse instead of a blessing, it may serve to weaken our attachment to wealth, and moderate us in the prosecution of worldly business.

PROFANE SWEARING.

It is difficult to account for a practice which gratifies no passions and promotes no interest, unless we ascribe it to a certain vanity of appearing superior to religious fear which tempts men to make bold with their Maker. If there are hypocrites in religion, there are also, strange as it may appear, hypocrites in impiety—men who make an ostentation of more irreligion than they possess. An ostentation of this nature, the most irrational in the records of human folly, seems to be at the root of profane swearing. It may not be improper to remind such as indulge in this practice, that they need not insult their Maker to show that they do not fear him; that they may relinquish this vice without danger of being supposed to be devout; and that they may safely leave it to other parts of their conduct to efface the smallest suspicion of their piety.

TEMPTATION.

THE only thing to which men do not appear to be naturally alive and awake, is the state of their immortal souls—They are in the midst of temptations every hour of their lives; and they appear at home when they are surrounded by their enemies. There is no alarm, no watchfulness. They watch against other things—against poverty, sickness and robbery. This state the Scriptures describe to be a kind of watchful sleep, and when the word of God summons the world to Salvation by Christ, it says, “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” And again, *Awake to righteousness, and sin not.* How many of those who call themselves the disciples of Christ are sleeping this day in security, as if they had no Master that watched, and prayed, and bled, and died for them all? Where is temptation not to be found? In what shape does it not appear? under what disguise does it not present itself? And what means does it not employ to ruin our salvation? It meets us in the market-places, and thrusts itself into our bargains; it offers gold, it offers silver, it leads us into the house of riot and intemperance; it brings wine and goblets, and says, *Eat and drink, for to-morrow you die;* it turns us from men to beasts, and having deprived us of our senses and our reason, it puts the weapon into our hand, bids us to commit violence and murder; it sits at our sides at our meals, and joins in our conversations; it creeps in our minds; and poisons our thoughts; it puts venom and impurity upon our tongues; it hides our bibles from us, or it shuts them when we open them.

Sometimes it crosses our path like a serpent : sometimes it steals upon us like a thief ; sometimes it comes muffled as a friend ; sometimes it rushes upon us like an assassin. *It is about our path and about our bed, and spieth out all our ways* :—how, then, shall any man pretend to say, that he is to sit still and sleep, and that every power of his soul is not to be in arms, with such a spectre as this following him through life ?

PRIDE.

THERE is no affection of the mind so blended in human nature, and wrought into our very constitution, as pride. It appears under a multitude of disguises, and breaks out in ten thousand different symptoms. Every one feels it in himself, and yet wonders to see it in his neighbour. Man is a sinful, and ignorant, and miserable being ; and these three reasons why he should not be proud, are, notwithstanding, the reasons why he is so. To be proud of virtue, is to poison yourself with the antidote ; to be proud of knowledge, is to be blind in the light ; to be proud of authority, is to make your rise your downfall. The best way to humble a proud man is to take no notice of him.

SINCERITY.

WHAT is sincerity ? And what is sincerity in the belief of an error ? Is a feeling or action of course right and approvable, or does it admit of an apology, because it is sincere ? Let us look at some things which we do with great and undoubted sincerity. Men sometimes hate one another

most sincerely. But is sincere hatred an innocent exercise? and is it an apology for one man's hating another, if he is sincere in it? Men do sometimes abuse one another with all their hearts, i. e., sincerely, by slanderous treatment of each other's character's. They talk out their feelings of animosity toward each other, just as they are; and their words and actions in so doing are doubtless an exact picture of their inward thoughts and feelings. And the Searcher of hearts sees that they are, really, sincere in abusing one another. But is their sincerity in so doing a sanction for so doing? Have you a right to talk and act as you please, if you will only talk and act just as you feel? Sincerity is a relative term. It asserts good or evil of a being, according to the nature of his actions. Gabriel sincerely loves God: and Satan sincerely hates him. Is there any doubt that the one is holy in his sincerity, and the other sinful? A pious man sincerely believes and loves the truths of God's word; an unconverted man, in different degrees of obviousness, sincerely dislikes the same truths. Is there any doubt that the first is approved of God, and that the latter are justly held guilty and condemned?

THE STREAM OF LIFE.

LIFE bears us on like the stream of a mighty river. Our boat, at first, glides down the narrow channel, through the playful murmuring of the little brook and the winding of its grassy border. The trees shed their blossoms over our young heads, the flowers on the brink seem to offer themselves to our young hands; we are happy

in hope, and we grasp eagerly at the beauties around us—but the stream hurries on, and still our hands are empty.

Our course in youth and manhood is along a wider and deeper flood, amid objects more striking and magnificent. We are animated by the moving picture of enjoyment and industry passing before us; we are excited by some short-lived disappointment. The stream bears us on, and our joys and our griefs are alike left behind us. We may be shipwrecked, but we cannot be delayed; whether rough or smooth, the river hastens towards its home, till the roar of the ocean is in our ears, and the tossing of its waves is beneath our feet, and the land lessens in our eyes, and the floods are lifted up around us, and we take our leave of earth and its inhabitants, until our further voyage there is no witness save the infinite and eternal.

Redemption by the blood of Christ is the ground-work of the majestic triumphant song of praise in heaven, and a disposition to join in it our chief capacity for, and actual happiness in, time and eternity.

SENSIBILITY.

It is very easy to cherish, like Sterne, the sensibilities that lead to no sacrifices and to no inconvenience. Most of those that are so vain of their fine feelings are persons loving themselves very dearly, and having a violent regard for their fellow-creatures in general, though caring little or nothing for the individuals about them. Of sighs and tears they are profuse, but niggardly of their money and their time.

THE OPINION OF THE WORLD.

WHAT though the polite man count thy fashion a little odd, and too precise, it is because he knows nothing above that model of goodness which he hath set himself, and therefore approves of nothing beyond it: he knows not God, and therefore doth not discern and esteem what is most like him. When courtiers come down into the country, the common home-bred people possibly think their habits strange; but they care not for that, it is the fashion at court. What need then that Christians should be so tender-foreheaded, as to be put out of countenance, because the world looks on holiness as a singularity? It is the only fashion in the highest court, yea, of the King of kings himself.

A THOUGHT FOR THE AFFLICTED.

WHEN the traveller Park, sinking in despondency in the deserts of Africa, cast his eye on a little plant by his side, he gathered courage: "I cannot look around without seeing the works and providence of God." And thus asks the Christian: "Will God feed the young ravens? Does he notice the falling of a sparrow? Should not I then hope in God? He that spared not his own son, but freely gave him up for us all, how shall he not, with him, freely give us all things? If comfort, therefore, were the best thing for me, he would have given me comfort."

ACTIVE BENEVOLENCE.

No man existing, be his station what it may, is exempted from the duty of inquiring what good he can do to others. That man must have seen little of mankind, who is ignorant of human misery; yet such knowledge is not to be acquired by those who converse merely with persons of their own rank; they must enter into the cottages and garrets of the poor; they must see them naked, hungry, and thirsty, exposed to the inclemencies of the weather, to the sudden attacks or slow wasting of disease; they must see the effects of their unruly passions, and their grovelling vices; they must be acquainted with all the consequences of ignorance and poverty. Evils like these must be known before they can be remedied; yet the generality of the upper ranks know little what their inferiors suffer.

BE LOWLY MINDED.

If thou art a vessel of gold, and thy brother but of wood, be not high-minded, it is God that maketh thee to differ; the more bounty God shows, the more humility he requires.—Those mines that are richest are deepest, those stars that are highest seem smallest, the goodliest buildings have the lowest foundations; the more God honoureth men, the more they should humble themselves; the more the fruit, the lower the branch on which it grows; pride is ever the companion of emptiness. O, how full was the apostle, yet how low was his language of himself,—“Least of saints, last of apostles, chief of sinners, no sufficiency to think, no ability to do;” all that he is, he is by

grace; thus humility teaches us in our doings to draw strength from God, not from ourselves; in our graces to ascribe their goodness to God, and their weakness to ourselves.

A BEAUTIFUL SIMILITUDE.

SUPPOSE a man confined in some fortress, under the doom to stay there until his death, and suppose there is for his use a dark reservoir of water, to which, it is certain, none can ever be added. He knows that the quantity is not very great; he cannot penetrate to ascertain how much, and it may be but very little. He has drawn from it, by means of a fountain, a great while already, and draws from it every day, but how would he feel each time of thinking of it?—Not as if he had a perennial spring to go to: not “I have a reservoir, I may be at ease.” No: but “I had water yesterday; I have water to-day; but my having had it, and my having it to-day, is the very cause that I shall not have it on some day that is approaching; and at the same time I am compelled to this fatal expenditure.” So is our mortal transient life.

THE WONDERS OF CREATION.

WHAT mere assertion will make any man believe, that in one second of time, in one beat of the pendulum of a clock, a ray of light travels over 192,000 miles, and would, therefore, perform the tour of the world, in about the same time that it requires to wink with our eyelids, and in much less than a swift runner occupies in taking

a single stride ? What mortal can be made to believe, without demonstration, that the sun is almost a million times larger than the earth ? and that, although so remote from us, that a cannon-ball shot directly towards it, and maintaining its full speed, would be twenty years in reaching it ; it yet affects the earth, by its attractions, in an inappreciable instant of time ? Who would not ask for demonstration, when told that a gnat's wing, in its ordinary flight, beats many hundred times in a second ? or, that there exist animated and regularly organized beings, many thousands of whose bodies, laid close together, would not extend an inch ? But what are these to the astonishing truths which modern optical inquiries have disclosed, which teach us that every point of a medium through which a ray of light passes, is affected with a succession of periodical movements, regularly recurring, at equal intervals, no less than 500 millions of millions of times in a single second ! that it is by such movements, communicated to the nerves of the eyes, that we see ; nay, more, that it is the difference in the frequency of their recurrence, which affects us with the sense of the diversity of colour ; that, for instance, in acquiring the sensation of redness, our eyes are affected 482 millions of millions of times ; of yellowness, 542 millions of millions of times ; and of violet, 707 millions of millions of times per second. Do not such things sound more like the ravings of madmen, than the sober conclusions of men in their waking senses ? They are, nevertheless, conclusions to which any one may most certainly arrive, who will only be at the trouble of examining the chain of reasoning by which they have been obtained.

THE SAVIOUR'S VISITS.

HIS visits are always designed to humble us ; and so long as they produce this effect, he will continue them ; for the high and holy One who inhabits eternity, dwells also with him who is of an humble and contrite heart. But if we begin to grow proud of his favours ; if we imagine that he blesses us with his presence, on account of any worthiness or excellence of our own ; if we begin to look down with contempt on others who are less favoured, he will quickly withdraw, and leave us to shame ; for while he gives grace to the humble, he sets himself against the proud, to abase them.

INDUSTRY.

MAN must have occupation, or be miserable. Toil is the price of sleep and appetite, of health and enjoyment. The very necessity which overcomes our natural sloth is a blessing. The world does not contain a briar or a thorn, which divine mercy could have spared. We are happier with the sterility which we can overcome by industry, than we could have been with spontaneous plenty, and unbounded profusion. The body and the mind are improved by the toil that fatigues them. That toil is a thousand times rewarded by the pleasure which it bestows. Its enjoyments are peculiar. No wealth can purchase them : no indolence can taste them. They flow only from the exertions which they repay.

THE FOLLY OF MEN.

MEN show particular folly on five different occasions ; when they establish their fortunes on the ruin of others ; when they expect to excite love by coldness, and by showing more marks of dislike than affection ; when they expect to become learned in the midst of repose and pleasure ; when they seek friends without making advances of friendship ; and when they are unwilling to succour their friends in distress.

EVERY THING ABOUT US IS SERIOUS.

WHEN Walsingham, a Secretary of State in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, arrived at old age, he retired to the country to end his days in privacy. Some of his former gay companions came one day to see him, and rallied him as being melancholy ; his answer deserves serious consideration : " No, I am not melancholy, but I am serious ; and it is very proper that we should be so. Ah ! my friends, while we laugh, every thing is serious about us. God is serious, who exercises patience towards us. Christ is serious, who shed his atoning blood for us. The Holy Ghost is serious, in striving against the obstinacy of our hearts. The Holy Scriptures are serious books ; they present to our thoughts the most serious concerns in all the world. The holy sacraments represent very serious and awful matters. The whole creation is serious. All in heaven are serious. All who are in hell are serious. How then can we be gay and trifling ? "

ANECDOTE.

SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH, when at Paris, paid a visit to the Deaf and Dumb Institution there. The Abbe Sicard introduced several of his pupils to him, to one of whom, Massien, at Sir James' request, the following question was submitted:—"Doth God reason?" Massien, on seeing the question written, at first appeared perplexed; but soon after returned this decisive and logical solution: "God sees every thing! To reason is to doubt, to hesitate, to inquire, the highest attribute of a limited intelligence: God, therefore, doth not reason." The Abbé, when at Brighton, a short time since, with Massien, was met at the Custom-house by a gentleman acquainted with the anecdote above related, and who begged of him again to propound the same question to his pupil, which he politely did, and the answer returned, was:—"Men reason, but in order to find truth. God, who knows truth, is not in want of reason, and does not reason."

DOXOLOGY.

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God and Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. Are we now kept from falling? Are we hereafter to be presented faultless? Unto Him alone who is able,—unto Him who only is wise,—belongs the praise of our present steadfastness, and shall belong the praise of our after perfection! Unto "God our Saviour" be ascribed the "glory,"

and we shall bring to his throne the tributes of reverence and gratitude. Unto Him be ascribed "the majesty," and our expressions of gratitude we shall mingle with acknowledgment of awe, for the unspeakable grandeur and dignity of his character. Unto him be ascribed "the dominion," and we shall bow ourselves down in the dust before the authority, underived and unlimited, by which all things, whether in the natural or the moral world, in time or eternity, are ordered' and disposed. Unto Him be ascribed the "power," and we shall ever supremely fear that almighty arm, which maintains the authority that is underived and unlimited.—Say, what is it we can accomplish, that we owe not to His "power?" What we can possess, which shall not belong to that "dominion?" And is there aught so wondrous as the condescension of divine "majesty" in stooping to regard us! Shall we not therefore offer unto God, "the glory" of all that we now are;—the praise of every blessing which we enjoy, and of all the good of which we are rendered susceptible? If we are "kept from falling" into the apostacy of the infidel,—into the flagrant crimes of the hardened professor,—into the defections of the worldly-minded,—into the carelessness of the luke-warm; if, instead of "falling" into these, we are persevering, by any progressive measures, in the opposite excellencies of faith, purity, spiritual mindedness and godly zeal; shall we not attribute the praise unto Him, without whom we had been nothing, and can do nothing?—Unto Him "be the glory now,"—unto him be it ascribed "for ever."—Yes! "for ever." When the periods of time shall no longer be revolving as the periods of our being; when our existence

shall no longer have its seasons marked by the revolution of sun, moon and stars ; when the soul, which in its present frail dwelling is moved by the changes of a fluctuating world, shall have survived unhurt amidst the destruction of the material creation itself, and during countless ages, numbered by the vast cycles of the celestial state, shall have continued "faultless before the presence of the divine glory, joying with exceeding joy,"—still even then, no continuance in purity, nor stability in blessedness, shall occasion a moment's forgetfulness of Him, who gives all, and upholds the possession of all. The song of gratitude shall still be the same. For ever shall it express the language of humility. All honour be disclaimed by the devout worshipper. The crown be laid low at the throne of mercy ;—and the glory of being preserved "faultless" through eternity, be given "unto the only wise God our Saviour."

THE END.

